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NO one ever got more brilliant quips and sallies into one speech than Mr. Lloyd George on Wednesday last. His account of the way in which Liberalism allowed itself to be bamboozled by the "stupid party" and the Free Trade cause to be canned, like so much Chicago meat, with only three squeals from the principal victims, was even better to hear than to read. It was a consummate speech, and we have no doubt that if a good Radical cause is offered him, Mr. Lloyd George is able and ready to lead a campaign against a Government whose national pretensions have never, to his credit, for a moment deceived him. But what in terms of present politics follows from his speech? When he told Sir Herbert Samuel (whose name on one occasion he affected only to remember with difficulty) that he and his colleagues had sold Liberalism, Free Trade and social reconstruction for office without authority, influence or respect, did he hope to induce them to resign from their invidious position? They have missed one excellent chance after another of resigning. They still stand like so many Cæsars on the brink of a perpetually receding Rubicon. Will Mr. Lloyd George's speech persuade them to take the plunge?

* * *

If the official leaders of Liberalism are simply to be counted out as so many Conservatives, can Mr. Lloyd George himself re-create an Opposition party for himself? Not, we suggest, on the Free Trade issue. Mr. Lloyd George has never been regarded as a very whole-hearted Free Trader, and we doubt if he will find Free Trade the best rallying cry for his forces. He was on firmer ground when he talked of the jettisoning of all the programme of social reconstruction for which he may fairly claim to have fought a great fight, and when he spoke—in terms which were really an understatement of the situation—of the "poltroonery" of this Government's behaviour at Geneva. Of course, the best thing that could happen from Mr. Lloyd George's point of view would be that the Conservative Committee, which is now reviving once again a phosphorescent scheme for "reforming" the House of Lords and restoring its veto, should persuade the Conservative Party to make one more attempt to build up that institution as "a bulwark against Socialism." If that happens—and it is quite likely—then we shall indeed find some of Mr. Lloyd George's sparks catching some very inflammable tinder.

* * *

Mr. de Valera is not going to let the grass grow under his feet. He announces a bold programme of abolitions. The Oath of Allegiance is to be abolished. It is a purely domestic affair, he argues, and it is not obligatory in the Treaty. The payment of the land annuities to Great Britain is to be dropped and, what is more, a claim will be made for the repayment of the substantial sums that have already been paid. The Public Safety

Act is to be suspended at once. Ultimately Mr. de Valera hopes to "assimilate the office of Governor-General with the Presidency of the Irish Republic." Thus there will no longer be "two Kings in Brentford," but one in Dublin and one, of a very sketchy nature, in Buckingham Palace. All this has a heroic ring, and no doubt a great many Irishmen will be thrilled by the shaking off of the English yoke—though in the matter of the annuities, where alone the yoke can be supposed to press, there may be some little difficulty. But a great many Irishmen will be more concerned about Mr. de Valera's constructive measures. These at the moment seem rather nebulous. There is apparently to be protection for Irish industries, but not a revenue tariff. There may be trade agreements for mutual preferences. As for unemployment—which has now reached a figure of 85,000 in the Free State—Ministers are going to "examine the problem very carefully."

* * *

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg only just failed to secure re-election as President of the Reich last Sunday. The polling was exceptionally heavy, something like 38,000,000 votes being cast out of a total electorate of between 43 and 44 millions. Hindenburg received rather more than 18½ millions and an extra 168,000 would have given him a clear majority over all the other candidates combined. Herr Hitler came next with 11,300,000, and the rest nowhere. There should be little doubt about the result of the second ballot on April 10th, at which a bare majority will suffice. Though all the candidates may go to the poll again, it is not certain that they will. Indeed it is said that negotiations are on foot to avoid a second ballot. Herr Hitler, however, does not seem in the mood to be called off, slight though his chances may be. A large number of the Stahlhelm and others who voted for the Nationalist last Sunday will support Hindenburg next time. But the victory of Hindenburg and constitutionalism, satisfactory as it may be, has not disposed of the Nazi movement, or of the Communists either (their candidate got nearly 5,000,000 votes last Sunday as against less than 2,000,000 in 1925). Hitler has been defeated, but he will not be done with until there is a big change of policy towards Germany on the part of Europe and of France in particular.

* * *

There is plenty of talk, but little agreement, about the project of a certain union for the Danubian States which has been launched by M. Tardieu. The plight of these countries—and more particularly Austria and Hungary—is plain enough, but the French remedy, even if it can be considered adequate from an economic point of view, raises serious political difficulties. The Germans, still smarting from the rejection of their own plan for a Zollverein with Austria, demur to it. Italy smiles on it with one side of her mouth and makes counter-suggestions with the other. Sir John Simon, who never likes to be premature, has not yet divulged the views of Great Britain. Nor are the five Danubian States themselves—Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, Rumania—at one about the plan. And, indeed, they cannot be till they know the exact form it is expected to take, whether it should be a complete customs union or only a system of mutual preferences, where Germany is to stand in relation to it, and where Italy. It may be unduly cynical to suggest that this scheme, like other schemes emanating from the Quai d'Orsay, fits in too nicely with France's European policy. But if it is to come to anything, it must be made to fit the interests of the whole Continent.

* * *

The story of the arrest and beating-up of Dr. Forrester Paton, a Scottish missionary, in Madras is a clear indication of the kind of thing which is happening in India. Dr. Paton has influential friends. Therefore his case was raised in the House of Commons, an inquiry was instigated, and Sir Samuel Hoare has written to apologise. Dr. Paton went to Madras to inquire into the proposal to set up a Red Cross hospital there to deal with the numerous "casualties" which were reported to result from the Government's present policy. He went to the bazaars to see if there was picketing going on and how the police dealt with it. He was stopped by a police sergeant, asked if he were a European, and, if so, why he was wearing "khaddar." He explained that he was a missionary, working among the poor. He was then severely beaten with lathis and was twice drenched with water turned on him from a water-cart. Sir Samuel Hoare does not dispute any of this. He expresses his sincere regret for the "mistake" and explains that: "It has been impressed upon magistrates and the Police that the law should not be overstepped in any respect and that excessive force should not be used. District magistrates have orders to hold a magisterial inquiry into all cases in which serious injury is caused and to investigate other incidents which attract public attention."

* * *

No one doubts that Sir Samuel and his colleagues in England are humane in intention and very anxious that their cautionary instructions should be obeyed. But we have plenty of experience of such matters. There is no way of avoiding gross abuse if you leave it to the police only to use force when they think necessary. What about the cases which do not "attract public attention"? If a European could be treated as Dr. Paton was "by mistake," what must be happening to quite innocent Indians? If Dr. Paton had not been a European and able to demand a trial before the High Court, he would never have got farther than the Lower Court, and would almost certainly have been condemned on police evidence. The Indian gaols are crowded; dozens are beaten by the police. How many of the prisoners are there illegally? How many are beaten "by mistake"? Is it also "by mistake" that sixteen men who were acquitted after eighteen months' trial at Chittagong have nevertheless been taken on board ship for an unknown destination in company with other men who were sentenced to transportation for life? Does the *India Review* put it too strongly when it asks why, if the executive had decided that the men must be transported under special ordinance in any case, there should have been the farce of eighteen months' trial?

* * *

The new German measures against coal imports, about which the British Government has made strong representations to Germany, afford a further illustration

of the accumulating obstacles in the way of maintaining world trade even at its present restricted level. It is not that the Germans do not want our coal; for no one doubts that, if industry and finance were in a healthy condition, they would still be one of our best markets. It is simply that they cannot afford to pay for it. Nor is the fact that their new restrictions discriminate heavily against British coal a sign that they prefer Polish coal to British. It means simply that it is easier for them to finance supplies from Poland. Mr. Runciman, flushed with his success in getting the French restrictions on our coal withdrawn, has now turned his attention to Germany, in whose case he can use the additional argument that the restrictions are a breach of the Anglo-German Commercial Treaty of 1924. That they are a breach seems clear enough. But Commercial Treaties are apt to be most honoured in the breach just now, and, even if Mr. Runciman gets the present restrictions modified, the Germans will probably find means of reimposing them in some other way. The Germans cannot now afford to buy even the materials that are indispensable for their economic life; and no treaties will stand out against circumstances which render them unworkable. We cannot hope to keep our trade with Germany unless we can take the necessary steps to restore her solvency.

* * *

The most important section of the Coal Mines Act of 1930, under which the present regulation of output and prices takes effect, lapses at the end of this year, and the present wage and hours conditions in the industry cease to be enforceable in July. The entire future regulation of the coal trade is therefore bound to come up for consideration, and both owners and miners have been asked to submit their views to the Government. The miners have already done this; and there is no doubt about their desire that the present system of regulation should remain in being. But the owners are, as before, sharply at variance. Scotland and South Wales both want to bring the system of quotas and price-fixing to an end, or at any rate to abolish the statutory sanctions, whereas the English coalowners mostly want the Act to go on. The owners, who were expected to submit their collective view to the Government this week, are thus still at loggerheads. No one knows what line the Government will take. In the matter of hours, unless fresh legislation is proved before July, the seven-hours shift will again come automatically into force. This gives the miners some basis for bargaining; and there must now be negotiations between the Miners' Federation and the owners over the whole field of policy.

* * *

The Minister of Health, Sir Hilton Young, addressed a conference of the authorities concerned with Public Assistance in London this week. On the whole, he appeared to be quite satisfied with the way things are going; and he handed out bouquets to the Public Assistance Committees in the most generous manner. But—there is a "but" after all. There are remarkable discrepancies in the treatment accorded by different, and even neighbouring, authorities to applicants for transitional benefit; and the Minister of Health wants the authorities to consult together, and bring their policies into harmony one with another. He does not want uniformity, since conditions differ from one area to another. But he does want consultation, and less divergence of policy than there is at present. In all this there is not a sign that Sir Hilton Young realises what is wrong. Different Public Assistance Committees hold quite different views about the rights of the unemployed. It is not merely that there are administrative variations, but that without central guidance different principles are being applied to similar cases. If the Government wants a co-ordinated policy, it will have to prescribe it, from the centre, in such a way that its merits can be publicly canvassed. The task of policy-making should not be left to the local bodies, which are, after all, administering national funds.

* * *

Ivar Kreuger, who killed himself in Paris last week-end, was a seller of matches. He was also one of the leading international financiers of the world. For everyone uses matches; and few trouble to be economical in their use. Here, then, was a commodity, in general use, capable of being produced very cheaply by mass-production methods, and commanding a market in which demand varies very little with the price. What an opportunity for the monopolist. Kreuger did almost collar the world's match supply. But he had to buy his privilege at a price—by lending large sums to needy Governments in return for a monopoly of match-selling. Thereafter, as long as all went well with the world, Kreuger was on velvet. But the world economic crisis brought him down. For the Governments to which he had lent money could not afford to pay; and he went on optimistically lending to them in the confidence of his strength. Difficulties began to press; and at a critical moment New York refused him a loan. He returned to Paris to meet his creditors, thought better of it, and shot himself. No one yet knows just what his reasons were, but it seems likely that overwork and nerve-strain prevented him from facing a situation which he could otherwise have handled. He was a very Puritan of finance, a man who spent little on himself. He leaves behind him a great monopoly of which he was the autocratic head.

* * *

By the gift of his house, 20, Portman Square, one of the finest Adam houses in London, Mr. Courtauld has once more put London and especially London University heavily in his debt. No one who lingered for any time in the modern rooms at the Exhibition of French Art would have failed to notice how many of the finest things were lent by Mr. and Mrs. Courtauld. Such loans are only the edge of Courtauld beneficence. By the gift of his house, much of the furniture and many of the pictures and drawings, Mr. Courtauld enormously helps the work he had already begun by the foundation of the Institute in 1930, and by undertaking the cost of the building in Bloomsbury. That building, destined to be the headquarters of the Courtauld Institute, will not be completed till 1935; but the educational work can now be started next October at 20, Portman Square, where the staff selected by the University will be working. It is not often that a donor so quickly follows up a benefaction by another which enables his first to be so quickly operative.

GENEVA AND TOKIO

AT last there is a patch of blue sky in the clouds over the Far East. The Assembly of the League has shown a spirit which was sadly lacking in the Council, and the resolution that it passed at Geneva last week will be, we hope, a decisive blow to the designs of the Japanese militarists and their abettors abroad. The terms of the resolution are not merely pious phrases. They emphasise the binding nature of the Covenant—and of the Kellogg Pact into the bargain—they condemn in so many words the aggression of Japan, and they cover the whole dispute, not Shanghai alone, but Manchuria also. The League has thus come into line, despite efforts in London and Paris to prevent it, with America, and the united front which Mr. Stimson's Note called for two months or more ago is at length presented to Tokio.

The effect in China has been instantaneous. Not only is the Nanking Government gratified, as it was bound to be, by the support given to the principles for which it has contended; the populace, the press and the students who have hitherto been cursing the League are now smothering it in bouquets. But we are not yet out of the wood. The Japanese have not dared to defy the Assembly; they disliked the resolution, but they abstained from voting against it, and may be forced to make the best of a bad job. The more prudent of them, indeed, are under no illusions about the Shanghai adventure. Their War Office had looked for a walk-over, and the stubborn resistance put up by the Chinese was a serious shock. The invasion has been a far more costly business than was ever contemplated, and far more costly, too, than Japan can afford. Her financial position is shaky; the yen is sick and has no present prospects of getting restoratives from abroad. In all the circumstances, she may well be prepared to cut her losses at Shanghai under some face-saving arrangement, and leave the Chinese in possession of their sovereignty and their wreckage. She must, indeed, be prepared for that, now that the League has committed itself. But there still remains Manchuria. Manchuria is in Japanese eyes an asset and not a liability, and it is in Manchuria that the contest between international law and national robbery will have to be decided.

It is evident to anyone who knows the facts that the present state of affairs there cannot be permanent. The Japanese have filched these three provinces from China. Their invasion was not justified by their grievances against the Chinese Government; their subsequent operations were not justified by the pretence of establishing order; and their entrenchment in the country is not justified by the installation of Mr. P'u as the head of a new independent State. The State is not independent; it is a Japanese protectorate. And Mr. P'u is not a head, but an imported hat. There is no secret about the reasons—the economic reasons, at least—for which the Japanese want to control Manchuria. Their strategic reasons may be a little less plain, though every student of political affairs has ample material to base an opinion on. But there are two things to be said about a Japanese occupation of Manchuria, whether open or camouflaged. In the first place, it is not necessary for the protection either of Japan's existing rights (which consist mainly in the South Manchurian railway) or of the commercial rights that she may legitimately hope for there in the future. It is true that Manchuria has not been as well governed by the Chinese as it ought to have been. But that is a fault that can be remedied, and Japan could rely on the sympathy and the help of western Powers in insisting that it shall be remedied. It is true also that Manchuria is as yet but poorly developed, and it is proper enough that the Japanese people should share in the benefit of Manchurian products. But this, too, could be and should be ensured by international agreement. Wise statesmen in Japan have realised that, and have worked for it; the militarists have put a spoke in their wheel.

In the second place, though a Japanese control of Manchuria may seem the easiest solution of the problem to the Japanese and their short-sighted friends in Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay, it is in reality no solution at all. The Chinese will not consent to it, and if the Chinese do not consent they will fight—if not with bayonets and bombs, then with the still more potent weapon of the boycott. Japan has already had a taste of this, and has found that force is no cure for it. What hope can she cherish that force in the future would have any better effect than it has had in the past, especially if the boycott should become, as it inevitably would, more widespread and more resolute? Nor, of course, would the danger of war—not merely economic war, but real war—be confined to the two disputants. Japanese action in the last few months has compelled half the world to stand to arms at Shanghai, and with the chance of being embroiled at any moment. And on the other side the Soviets, to whom war would be a calamity, have been in a state of acute anxiety lest the Japanese should force a conflict on them. The Russian fears may be exaggerated, but they are certainly not baseless. Moscow, like other capitals, has evidence of the ambitions of the Japanese imperialists, and it sees, moreover, Japanese armies, and a horde of White Russians hanging on to their skirts, encamped on the edge of Soviet territory. With Japan dug in in Manchuria, the odds on war in the Far East would be at a height that none but armament manufacturers could contemplate with equanimity, and however it might begin the chances are that it would end, like that of 1914, as a world war. And, if we choose to look at it from a purely British point of view, and assume that we can make light of this risk, can we ignore the effects that would be produced in India by the victory of Japanese aggression? The plain truth is that for us, as for everyone else, the upholding of the Covenant is the policy of safety as well as of honour.

The Assembly has, at the eleventh hour, purged the League from the charges of hypocrisy and cowardice under which it was labouring. With its prestige restored and with America in alliance it can bring the Japanese to reason. But it must be firm. It must insist on the evacuation not merely of Shanghai but of Manchuria. If the resolution of last week is not enough, there are other means in reserve—the withdrawal of ambassadors, the stoppage of munitions,

the refusal of all loans. We hope that there will be no need to use these weapons. We do not want to see Japan put in the pillory. We want her to be sat at an international Round Table. That—and not a card table for two, with all the aces on Tokio's side—is the best way of making a fair end to this quarrel, and of securing Japanese as well as Chinese rights.

SIR WILLIAM EXPLAINS

IN accordance with instructions from the Editor, I waited upon Sir William Wheat (vulgarly known as "Quota Bill") to obtain information for THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. Sir William courteously granted me an interview.

"My object is," he said, "to provide wheat growers in the United Kingdom with a secure market and an enhanced price for home-grown wheat of millable quality, without a subsidy from the Exchequer and without encouraging the extension of wheat cultivation to land unsuitable for the crop."

"An admirable object," said I, "but is it not rather difficult to achieve?"

"Difficult, no doubt, but not, I think, impossible," replied Sir William, blandly. "The enhanced price will be secured by means of 'deficiency payments' to wheat growers on the basis of their certified sales, the payments representing (subject to a deduction for administrative expenses) the difference between the average market price of home-grown millable wheat and a standard price of 45s. a quarter."

"'Subject to a deduction for administrative expenses' is rather a sinister phrase. Do you think the expenses will be high?" I inquired.

"High, no doubt, but not, I hope, unduly high," replied Sir William, evasively.

"But you said there was to be no subsidy."

"No subsidy from the Exchequer."

"How, then, will you secure the funds to enable the 'deficiency payments' to growers to be paid?"

"Quota payments in respect of flour delivered in the United Kingdom will be required from flour millers and flour importers, and will be calculated by reference to the proportion (quota) of the total flour supply represented by the amount of the anticipated supply for that year of home-grown millable wheat."

"I beg your pardon," said I. "Would you mind saying that again?"

"For the purpose of meeting the expenditure to be defrayed by the Wheat Commission, every miller and every importer of flour will be liable to make to the Wheat Commission, in respect of each hundredweight of his output of flour, a payment of an amount calculated and prescribed so as to represent, as nearly as may be, a sum equal to what would have been the price deficit in respect of the quota of home-grown millable wheat which would have been used in the production of that hundredweight if the anticipated supply of such wheat for the cereal year in which that hundredweight was delivered had been used at a uniform rate per hundredweight of flour in the production of the estimated supply of flour for that year."

"I am not sure that I quite understand even now; but you propose, in effect, a tax on imported wheat and flour, so as to provide funds for the subsidy?"

Sir William looked profoundly shocked.

"On the contrary," he said, stiffly, "my whole object is to avoid taxing the food of the people. Some Ministers are heavily pledged against food taxes, and Mr. Baldwin can never forget his defeat in 1923."

"I see. So there will be a subsidy, but not paid by the Exchequer; and there will be a tax, but not collected by the Exchequer."

"The deficiency payments will be made by the millers," replied Sir William. "But I don't say that the burden will not be passed on to the bakers," he added blandly.

"Or that the bakers will not pass it on to the consumers?"

"That's enough on that subject," said Sir William, hurriedly. "Now, a secure market . . ."

"One moment. How much is the subsidy expected to cost the consumers?"

"About £6,000,000 a year for the first three years. But, of course, after Ottawa . . ."

"And what would be the cost to the consumers of a ten per cent. duty on imported wheat and flour?"

"About £5,500,000, I think."

"I see. So we are to pay an extra half-million for the privilege of not being taxed. You were about to say something with regard to Ottawa?"

"After Ottawa," replied Sir William proudly, "I hope to be allowed to extend my scheme to Dominion wheat, which will, no doubt, involve a considerable expansion of the figures mentioned."

"No doubt it will," said I. "Now, how do you propose to make a secure market?"

"A secure market will, in effect, be provided by an obligation imposed upon millers—a contingent obligation to purchase stocks of home-grown millable wheat remaining unsold at the close of any cereal year."

"How nice. How will the price be fixed in these contingently obligatory deals?"

"The price will be, as nearly as may be, the price which would be obtained by a willing seller from a willing buyer for home-grown millable wheat."

"But since, *ex hypothesi*, there will be no willing buyers, won't it be rather difficult to determine how much a willing buyer would pay? If there is no demand, doesn't the price fall immediately to nothing?"

"In theory, perhaps, that is so, but in practice I do not think that the Minister, after consultation with the Wheat Commission, will have much difficulty in fixing a fair price."

"Opinions may differ as to whether it is fair. But you said, I think, that you had some device for doing all this without encouraging the extension of wheat cultivation to land unsuitable for the crop?"

"Yes. In order to limit the quantity for which deficiency payments may be paid, the Minister will be required to prescribe, for each cereal year, the quantity of home-grown millable wheat which he anticipates will be sold by growers during that year, and if the quantity so sold exceeds the anticipated supply, the deficiency payments to be made to growers will be reduced proportionately. The anticipated supply, however, cannot for this purpose exceed in any cereal year six million quarters."

"How do you mean, 'cannot exceed'?"

"I mean that if the Minister really anticipates a supply exceeding six million quarters, he will be assumed not to do so."

"Then the millers won't be forced to buy the surplus?"

"Oh, yes, they will. That forms an exception to the rule which I have just explained to you. You are really very dense. Perhaps you will understand if I put it another way. If, in any cereal year, the ascertained average price of home-grown millable wheat is less than the standard price, every registered grower will be entitled to receive from the Wheat Commission in respect of every hundredweight of such wheat of his own growing sold by him in that year, not being wheat harvested before the year 1932, a payment representing, subject to deductions for administrative expenses, the difference between the said average price and the standard price: provided that if in any cereal year the quantity of home-grown millable wheat of their own growing sold by registered growers exceeds the anticipated supply of such wheat for that year, each registered grower shall be entitled to receive deficiency payments for that year in respect only of that number of hundredweights which bears to the number of hundredweights of such wheat

of his own growing sold by him in that year the same proportion as the said anticipated supply bears to the quantity of home-grown millable wheat of their own growing sold by registered growers in that year."

"Well, suppose I sell my crop favourably, and get, say, 35s. a quarter for it;' and suppose that other farmers are not so lucky; say that the average price is 25s. What subsidy shall I receive?"

"That depends upon the Minister's forecast. If the total realised supply exceeds the anticipated supply, your deficiency payment will be reduced proportionately. But if the Minister makes a good guess you will receive an additional 20s. a quarter, making 55s. a quarter altogether."

"Thank you," said I. "Of course, that's perfectly clear now. I think I should like to be a registered grower, please."

"Perfectly simple," replied Sir William, "you've only got to apply to the Wheat Commission. I expect quite a lot of people will be applying. But it might be worth your while to wait a few weeks and see what my friend Sir William Bacon (they call him 'Bacon Quota') will do for you."

PETER IBBETSON.

A LONDON DIARY

A CORRESPONDENT who was at Briand's funeral writes to me as follows: "The pomp and splendour of Aristide Briand's funeral were equalled only by its incongruity. Never had a corpse been so mishandled. He was buried, as Léon Blum said, with 'pompe cléricale, pompe militaire, pompe ministérielle.' As he lay in the Clock Room of the Quai d'Orsay a pious hand had placed a large silver crucifix on his coffin, and, just before the funeral began, the Archbishop of Paris gave the old freethinker and the excommunicated author of the Separation Bill the blessing and absolution of the Church. The *Action Française* has been chuckling over this canonisation of 'Saint Aristide'; 'the pro-German Vatican,' says the Royalist paper, 'has at last recognised the services which the "traitor" has rendered Germany!' And then came the national funeral. The coffin containing the remains of the Apostle of Peace was placed on the catafalque outside the Quai d'Orsay. The tribunes on the right, nearest the catafalque, were crowded with prelates and generals; in the tribune on the left sat M. Doumer, Briand's successful rival in the Presidential election, and the members of the Tardieu Government. After a very dry funeral oration by M. Tardieu, in which he recalled his 'friend's' solid belief in 'Security First'—some imaginative French reporters detected a gurgle of tears in Tardieu's voice!—the military parade began. It lasted for about an hour, and something like ten thousand troops—infantry and cavalry of every description, marines, firemen and colonial troops (the latter reminded one of the great 'imperial' pageants at the Colonial Exhibition)—marched past the catafalque where Briand lay. Standing on the parapet of the Quai facing the catafalque, I saw the last of Briand's coffin through a moving wood of rifles and bayonets which—to quote a contemporary—'glittered joyfully in the sun'! A few shells dropped from above and a dummy gas attack would have made the illusion complete. As the procession moved down the Champs Elysées a little crowd of pacifists created a disturbance outside the offices of the *Figaro* by crying 'à bas la guerre' and 'Vive la paix'! But fortunately the rowdies were quickly dispersed by the police. A friend of mine phoned up Pertinax on Saturday morning and asked him if he would go to the funeral. 'No,' said Pertinax, 'I am afraid I'll be stoned.' He would have been quite safe."

* * *

Taken by themselves, I should be disposed to discount considerably the alarmist reports in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* about the plots of émigrés and capitalists against Russia. Moscow has always prophesied an anti-Soviet war, and, knowing our own internal troubles and peaceable intentions, we have regarded this talk either as propaganda or as persecution mania. But the war in the Far East has altered the situation, and the pro-Japanese attitude of the French Government, directly reflected in the French press, has clearly been in part dictated by a desire to have a strong Japan on the Eastern frontier of Russia. A well-informed Englishman now in Moscow sends me an account, which is, I think, really disturbing, of the evidence on which Russian fears are based. Early in January a White Russian paper in Harbin, where there is a very large colony of émigrés, published a declaration by Simeonov, one of the leading White generals, stating that he was ready to start an anti-Red International. Shortly afterwards the reliable *Dépêche de Toulouse* (commonly called the *Manchester Guardian* of France) published a report from its Harbin correspondent which mentioned the increasing activities of the White Guards in the Far East. Inquiries were made in émigré circles in Paris, which has always been the headquarters of émigré activity, and the reports were confirmed. On January 19th, *Shen Bau*, a Shanghai paper, reported that the Japanese were bringing rifles to Harbin and distributing them among White Russians. About the same time the *New York Evening Post* also stated that Simeonov was carrying on a recruiting campaign in Mongolia and Manchuria and claiming Japanese support.

* * *

To turn now to the events of last month. First, on the Western front, it was stated in the *Berliner Montagpost* on February 8th that the Perlura Agency was canvassing in the Ukraine for a Ukrainian Far Eastern Army, and on the 26th a cable from the Polish press agency, *Pat*, stated that émigré Russians from Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia were passing through Poland *en route* for the Far East. In the East itself the *Harbinskaya Vremya*, a White Russian paper, mentioned early in February that Simeonov was carrying on negotiations with certain Mongolian princes, while there are accounts in Moscow of a recent meeting of forty White Russian organisations, which met to discuss how to make use of the new Japanese State in Manchuria as a stepping-stone to Siberia. References to the assembling of White Guards round the Mukden-Shanghai-Kwan railway appear also in the *Harbinskaya Vremya*. This section of the White Army is stated to be the basis for a force, 10,000 strong, for Manchuria. Contemporary with these reports from the Far East an appeal, reprinted from a White Russian Shanghai paper, was published in Poland, in the newspaper, *Za Cvobodo*, asking for funds from White Russians all over the world to assist the movement in the East. The appeal was signed by General Ditterichs. The Peking newspaper *Zaria* states that schools of aviation have been opened in both Harbin and Mukden for White Russians. Further, on February 27th, another Tokio paper reported that several of the most important of the White exile generals were staying in the vicinity of Tokio. Another recent report states that White Guards have already taken part in military manœuvres on the side of the Japanese, and it is further understood that their arms and uniforms are coming from Japan.

* * *

How much do all these reports in White Russian papers amount to? I do not think they are negligible. The existence of a White Russian international organisation aiming at the reconquest of Russia, with headquarters in Harbin and several European capitals, is not in dispute. The sympathy of the French Government and the influence of France in the new Central European States which border Russia is not in dispute. Japanese ambitions in Manchuria are not in dispute. The reports do, I think, show that these forces are coming together as a result of Japan's successful invasion of Manchuria. The active co-operation between the Whites and the Japanese, backed by powerful

support from Europe, seems to me an ugly fact which it would be silly to ignore.

* * *

As I watched the extremely amusing plays produced by the children at Bertrand Russell's school at Harting last Saturday, it seemed to me that two prevailing notions about education were blown sky-high. The first is that literary and artistic achievement must proceed from solitary individuals. I am assured that in writing these plays no grown-up takes any hand and that no child is individually responsible. The group talks until it has worked out an idea: they all suggest lines and criticise each other's suggestions until a complete play, the genuine product of co-operation, emerges. The other thing that was quite clear to me was that these children know more facts, are better educated in the old-fashioned as well as in the new-fashioned sense, than children of the orthodox type. This is not by any means true of all "crank" schools. Take the third play done by the older children of nine to twelve years old. It was an Egyptian play, based on some considerable study of Egyptian mythology, and the idea of it was that a bold Egyptian Prince denies the old gods and finds when judged in Hell that they have no real existence. But the Archfiend Let, the spirit of evil, cannot be destroyed by being told he is not real. He remains to reinstate the gods in men's minds. When I remember the sort of things I was learning when I was ten or eleven years old, I feel thoroughly angry at being born too soon.

* * *

I felt quite sorry for Sir Walter Gilbey the other day when he told us how he blushed to see Rotten Row desecrated by improperly dressed and even bare-headed riders. But I now see that he is not a lonely soul. The *Times* published a serious leader supporting a letter from Mr. Eric Maturin on Tuesday last. For my part I can find no adequate comment. Mr. Eric Maturin wants evening dress to be compulsory in the stalls of West End theatres. He writes:

> It is surely rather annoying for any who have paid for their stalls in a theatre and have taken the trouble to don evening dress, for their comfort and in consideration for those sitting next to them, to find themselves seated next to persons still wearing the same clothes they have worked in all through the day. Anyone who can afford the price of a stall is sure to possess evening dress in some form or other, and one does not feel one is allowed the benefits and privileges of being a stall holder unless some sort of regulation is in force with regard to the wearing of evening dress.
>
> It is a great pity that the pre-war custom in this respect is not reverted to, and on all sides I have heard the same opinion expressed. Before the war London was the one city in the world which always presented the smartest and most dignified appearance when viewed from the stalls of her West End theatres at night. Cannot this essentially "English," clean and comfortable custom be revived as a matter of principle and passed as a regulation by the managers of West End theatres?

CRITIC.

PRISON

[*The author of this article has recently served a five years sentence of imprisonment in Dartmoor and other prisons. We do not necessarily endorse all his criticisms, but the point of view of the prisoner is important.*—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

IN the course of a sentence of five years, which meant four years actual imprisonment from the date of arrest to the date of release, there is ample opportunity for an observant man to study the system from within. Such a study reveals grave defects both from the point of view of administration and discipline. But the foremost question is: What is the policy pursued by the heads of the prison administration? Is there evident any earnest and sincere desire to reform the criminal? No such desire was at all evident or manifest to the writer during the course of his experience at Parkhurst and Dartmoor Prisons.

Let us consider for a moment the prisoner's working day and its effect on the average man. The prisoners at Parkhurst and Dartmoor rise at 7 and have breakfast about 7.15 locked in their cells. At 8.15 they leave their cells for the parade ground, whence they are taken to the exercise grounds until 9 a.m. From 9 a.m. until 11.30 they work at their various tasks in parties of about 20, but in no circumstances do the prison staff require any definite amount of work to be produced. In fact they are mostly not in the least interested in the amount of production from the prisoners' labours, but solely in the prisoners keeping "reasonably quiet" at all times and in enforcing absolute silence during the few minutes during which the Governor pays his daily visits to the workshops. The writer was for twelve months in the twine working shop, where the joint efforts of twenty-five men produced in the course of one week string to the value of about twenty-two shillings. From 11.30 to 1.30 the prisoners are confined in their cells, during which they have their dinner. At 1.30 they are again taken to the exercise yards until 2, when they return to the workshops until 4.15. At 4.15 they return to their cells, when, after supper is served at 4.30, the doors are locked for the night. A small percentage of long sentence men are allowed out a few evenings a week from 6 till 7 to play such simple games as draughts, dominoes, etc.

It will thus be seen that the working hours are less than five per day, and that about 16 hours a day are spent confined in the cells. Would it be possible to devise a more uneconomic system and a system more designed to break down the will to work that may exist in a man on admission to such a routine?

It is the legal right of every prisoner to petition the Home Secretary on any ground he may desire. The writer has never yet heard of any prisoner who received any satisfaction from any petition, and has been informed by officials with over a score of years service that they have never heard either of such a case. If anything is said by the prisoner that is at all doubted, there is a grave risk of it being twisted into a charge of "false accusations against officials" which is invariably followed by severe punishments, such as so many days bread and water, loss of six months' remission, and loss of privileges—in other words, six months' penal servitude for any offence of which he is found guilty without the right of being represented or of calling evidence in support of his statements. Can the Home Secretary seriously suggest that his departmental officials are so perfect that he can in common fairness send in answer to *every petition* the printed reply to the effect that he has considered the prisoner's petition and sees no ground or reason to grant the request?

Every quarter the prison is visited by an official who calls himself a Director of Convict Prisons, and every prisoner has a right to interview this man by way of a request for some privilege or as an appeal from some punishment or decision of the prison Governor. Here again such an appeal is in practice a complete farce. No case of any alteration of a punishment or a decision given by the Governor has, as far as my knowledge goes, ever been heard of where these Directors have exercised their undoubted powers.

The system appears to be far more concerned with the running of its own machinery than it is with fulfilling the useful purpose such as turning out the products of the prisoners' labour. Surely it should be satisfied with having deprived the prisoner of his liberty, coupled with the necessity for some honest hard work on his part in order that the country should not have to support colossal financial burdens in connection with prisons. Every petty irritating restriction that can be thought of is devised. One example will suffice: the prison notepaper on which the prisoner *must* write his letters, contains an impudently worded mass of regulations apparently designed to frighten off friends from keeping up a connection with the imprisoned man. Also all incoming letters have endorsed across them in red ink the prisoner's name and number, with the result that if he wishes to retain them he cannot do so without anyone who reads them knowing where he has been.

There has also been some talk about "an extensive educational system" in prisons. There were no classes of any kind at Parkhurst when the writer was there from July, 1929 to May, 1930; whereas at Dartmoor, out of about 500 prisoners, only sixty could go to the classes. Most of the classes are on useless and uninteresting subjects, and here again not the slightest attempt is made to devise any instruction that could be useful in after life. An official at every prison rejoices in the title of "schoolmaster," but where is the school, or of what he is master except the art of weaving "red-tape," no one has ever been able to discover.

As was stated recently in a letter to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION by the Hon. Secretary of the Howard League for Penal Reform, it is essential, in order to encourage production and to enable a man so far as possible to earn his keep, to introduce some wage system. Surely it would come as some surprise to the great majority when it is known that a prisoner in an English prison despite his free labour costs the State, according to the Prison Commissioners' Report, £69 per annum. The prisons are grossly overstaffed in the higher administrative branches. Deputy Governors abound and chief warders all have their deputy chief warders. The resultant expense is heavy, and it is difficult to see what useful purpose is served by such duplication.

In conclusion, it would appear practically certain that if the undermentioned alterations in the system were effected not only would there be no outbreaks similar to the recent one at Dartmoor, but the tax-payer would be saved thousands of pounds per annum. The alterations referred to include:

1. The establishment of a working day of at least nine hours in workshops efficiently equipped and in charge of skilled craftsmen instructors, not as at present in charge of promoted discipline warders who have had little or no training at their task.

2. The permission for prisoners to earn money at their task must be given in order that the man should leave the prison with a sum of money sufficient to tide him over the necessary period until he can find employment. At present he is given the petty sum of 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. according to the length of journey, with a hint that by calling on the Central Association he may get more. However, the majority of the men have such little faith in the integrity of this Central Association—a kind of super Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society—that they will do almost anything to avoid going near their offices. Naturally no one would advocate the discharge, for example, of a long sentence man with a relatively large sum of money in his actual possession, but if by his efforts he had saved a considerable sum the majority of it could be sent to the local County Court, where he could apply to the Judge privately for its disbursement, after the manner in which Workmen's Compensation Awards are disbursed.

3. The abolition of a mass of petty restrictions as to correspondence and visits. For petty breaches of prison discipline it is no uncommon thing for a prisoner's relatives to be deprived of letters from him and visits to him for periods of six months and over.

4. The more careful selection of the higher prison officials. The writer has been amazed at the behaviour of alleged public school men and retired Service officers towards the fellow-men in their charge. The writer found that there existed among the humble warders far more kindliness and courtesy than was to be found where one has a right to expect it.

5. *Every* man, whatever his offence or past record, should have the chance to attend educational classes should he wish to do so, and attendance for illiterates should be compulsory. Every man who wishes to be visited by an unofficial visitor should have the chance to do so. At Dartmoor only a few selected men were allowed unofficial visitors. Also the unofficial visitor should be allowed wider discretionary powers, such as writing letters to the prisoner's relatives, a privilege consistently withheld at Dartmoor.

6. The abolition of the post of permanent Prison Chaplain, and the substitution of Church Army workers in their place. A permanent Prison Chaplain rarely, if ever, has the men's confidence.

7. The abolition of the Board of Visitors. These visitors are usually magistrates and are appointed by the Home Secretary, and have wide powers of punishment, and are also a Court of Appeal from the Governor. However, if they behaved on the Bench as they do in the prison they would not be on the Bench a week. No case has ever been heard of where they have varied a decision of punishment when appealed to, nor has an acquittal of a prisoner charged before them ever come to the writer's knowledge. They deliberate in private, together with the Prison Governor, who is also, it must be remembered, the prosecutor. Their whole procedure is a travesty of justice, as they have no legal training nor is there present anyone who is competent to advise them. The prisoner invariably "gets it in the neck." The writer would advocate their total abolition, and the substitution for them of the visiting Assize Judge coupled with the right of the accused prisoner to appoint an advocate or prisoner's friend.

8. Permission should be given within reasonable limits for prisoners to retain on discharge the products of their brains and labour that have been executed in their spare time. At present anything in the way of literary efforts, or paintings or drawings are inspected on discharge, and it has been openly admitted that the reason for this is the fear that the prisoner may earn a few shillings on his discharge. Could anything be more pettifogging?

9. The appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the whole prison system in England is long overdue. Only by a ventilation of such scandalous waste both of money and human life can the legislature ever be expected to realise that here is a problem that needs tackling without any further delay.

SMASH AND GRAB

As a lover of law,
And of order and peace,
I have groaned as I saw
The amazing increase

In the number of smash-and-grab raiders who daily defy the police.

Was it Wallace's books
Do you think, or the craze
For the debonair crooks
Of the films and the plays

That started this fashion for violence—or merely the fact that it pays?

Can it possibly be
That the criminal mind
An ingenuous plea
For its morals will find

Till the nations shall cease to provide it with blatant examples in kind—

Till each Power is afraid
Any longer to brag
Of a smash-and-grab raid
Known as "planting the flag,"

And snatching a province is rated no higher than snatching a bag?

MACFLECKNOE.

GOOD LUCK

THE luckiest man I ever knew—no, now that I come to think of it, I could not name the luckiest man I ever knew. The luckiest man I ever knew, indeed, was rather unlucky, in my opinion, except where money was concerned. He was a man who could scarcely back a horse without its winning. He seldom took a ticket in a sweepstake without drawing a starter. In his business money seemed to grow without effort on his part. He was, however, a man without interest in everything else that makes life interesting. I envied him his money, but I would not have exchanged even my existence for his money.

A few days ago a woman who had won several hundred pounds in the Irish sweepstake last November committed suicide. On the day on which she drew the horse, she was, I suppose, technically one of the lucky ones. Pestered by beggars, however, and living in the constant fear of being robbed, she found life unendurable and killed herself. One can scarcely call a person lucky until one knows whether the consequences of the luck will also be lucky.

I am not sure whether my own luck has always proved to be luck in the event. Was I lucky, for example, to be born with a good memory? It seemed so when I was at school, since it enabled me without much trouble to memorise enough to scrape through the day's work without disgrace. I could at the last moment get by heart the lines of poetry that I might be called on to repeat in the class, forgetting them before the day was out. The unfortunate thing was, however, that, as a result of having a good memory, I lost it. It became atrophied through insufficient use, and to-day I doubt if I could repeat from memory a single poem in English literature. If I were cast on a desert island without books I should not be able to reconstruct even one of the shorter lyrics of Wordsworth. I might make a shot at *My Heart Leaps Up;* but, unfortunately, that is not one of the poems that I care for most. I could almost write out *The Daffodils*, but the resultant poem would, I am certain, be partly by Wordsworth and partly by me. For the rest, I could manage the first dozen lines of *Paradise Lost* with a few variant readings inserted, bits of the "To Be or Not To Be" speech, odd fragments of Keats and Shelley, lines or half-lines from other writers, and the choruses of a number of music-hall songs. That would be the entire stock of literature that I could present in manuscript to my newly formed desert-island library. But stay. The awful thought enters my mind that I should probably be able to produce a perfect version of *A Garden is a Lovesome Place, God Wot*—a poem which is considered by some good judges to be in the running for the position of the worst poem ever written. I do not think quite so badly of it as that, but I should not like to live alone with it on a desert island. It would be a terrible thing if, every time one tried to remember a poem, one could recall only *A Garden is a Lovesome Place, God Wot*, or *My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold*. As the odds are greatly against my ever being cast on a desert island, the discussion of what I should be able to do on one has, perhaps, only an academic interest. Still, even the remote possibility that I might be left alone in the world with those two poems puts me in the mood to incite the young to practise their memories while there is time.

On the other hand, many people will tell you that a superlatively good memory is by no means an unmixed blessing—that it is seldom accompanied by intellectual power and so forth. This may be true, but, having lost the memory I once had, I should be prepared to risk the possession of a gift which seems to have done comparatively little injury to Scott, Macaulay and Browning. I should even count myself lucky if, like an old clergyman I once heard of, I could, on hearing any verse in the Bible except the last, immediately repeat the verse that follows it.

Let me not dwell too gloomily on my ill luck, however. Most of us are fortunately so constituted that we have recurrent moods in which we concentrate on the luck we have enjoyed and decide that we have been lucky in nearly everything that has happened to us—lucky to have been born in the place in which we were born, lucky to have had the relations we have had, lucky to have gone to such and such a school and to such and such a college or university. There are times, I imagine, when the ordinary man feels as if he had been singled out by Providence for exactly those gifts of fortune which he would have chosen if he had been offered his choice in advance. I often feel that about having been born in Belfast. I find that men who were born in Bradford have exactly the same feeling about having been born in Bradford. And yet, for some strange reason, nobody seems to wish to have been born either in Belfast or in Bradford except the people who were actually born there. Who, then, is to decide which is the luckiest town to have been born in? Most of us are optimists in our memories, and chiefly count those things lucky which have happened to ourselves. Some men will even describe as a bit of luck a past illness that had excellent consequences.

Perhaps I have exaggerated, however, in suggesting that I have had all the gifts of fortune which I should have chosen myself had I been offered my choice. There was a time, indeed, when, looking forward, I should have chosen to be an athlete as the luckiest thing that could befall a human being. If I had been given my choice and had chosen this, however, would it have proved to be lucky in the end? An enthusiastic lover of cricket, and a friend of many great cricketers during the past fifty years, recently expatiated on the fate of those who become great cricketers. Cricket, he declared, is not only a game but a career, and, as it is a career that seldom lasts beyond middle age, many an amateur cricketer finds himself in the forties with the career that has absorbed him gone from him; and this at a time when it may be too late to build up another one. It would obviously be absurd to suggest that all, or even most, retired amateur county cricketers are melancholy beyond the common lot and are left stranded without any compensating interest in life. Yet it is reasonable to believe that the retired sportsman who has been exclusively interested in sport is as unlucky in his fate as the retired business man who has been exclusively interested in his business.

It was evidently the conviction that this is true that led a friend of mine the other day, when talking of the death of a great Rugby football player in his late twenties, to express the opinion that this was the luckiest thing that could have happened to him. He had been at school with this particular player, and described him as a boy to whom football was a ruling passion, to the exclusion of everything else. He talked of nothing but football, and if he met a famous footballer would begin about the game, asking eager questions and laying the answers to heart. To see a great footballer, indeed, was to him an experience comparable to that felt by Wordsworth before the cataract or the setting sun. He ultimately reached the pinnacle of his career when he was chosen to play for his country. Those who have seen him play remember how from the kick-off he played the game like a man indifferent to death or wounds. He was one of those ubiquitous players who seem always to be in the post of danger, and, however fierce the rush he stopped and however ruthless the tackling, he would always rise, bruised and battered, from the ground with a curious mystical smile on his face. It was almost as if in this wild warfare he had found peace of soul, and the very goal of happiness. According to my friend, he had enjoyed every triumph which he would have asked life to give him, and if he had survived his football days nothing could have happened to him that would not have been an anti-climax. He was therefore to be regarded as exceptionally lucky both in his life and in his death.

It may be so, but I call no man lucky who has only one string to his bow, whether the string is sport or money-making. I have myself a half-conviction that the only lucky thing is to be a philosopher with the constitution of Mark Tapley and a number of other things that Mark Tapley lacked. To be completely lucky, of course, the philosopher would have to have been born in Belfast. But, perhaps, if he were a real philosopher he would not mind where he had been born. Y. Y.

Correspondence

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(We are again only able to print a small selection from the correspondence received. May we appeal once more to correspondents to be as brief as possible?—ED. N. S. & N.)

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer has been getting himself into hot water by a review of my book *Public Schools*, in which he took the opportunity of relating some of his own experiences at school. His indictment is one which, from recent experience and information obtained as widely as was practicable, I should roughly endorse; and it is therefore not difficult to understand the irritation of your schoolmaster correspondents (who are probably neither deaf nor blind) when they now submerge your office with letters insisting that nothing much is wrong after all, and that stupidity, brutality and pederasty are not nearly so common as they used to be. . . . They are, in fact, as most schoolboys (though too few schoolmasters) know, still fairly common; and it would be the easiest thing in the world to write any number of books, compiled from personal experiences at the most reputable schools, to show how stupid and brutal and beastly life at these places can occasionally be—though not so easy, as Mr. Mortimer suggests, to get them either published or believed.

But that seemed to me to be rather a cheap and unfair way of criticising these schools, and in my book I deliberately eschewed highly coloured revelations and sensational abuses (of which it would be only too easy to lay my hands on quite a nice little collection), and chose instead to attack the principles of which they are merely the symptoms, and as remedies to suggest nothing that I had not seen actually working in a school—not perfectly, certainly (what human institution is perfect?), but at any rate vastly better than the methods I was criticising.

I do not for a moment doubt the existence of Mr. Roger Clarke's "enlightened undergraduates of yesterday" who now form the younger generation of public schoolmasters; of course, these schools contain many enlightened and devoted men—I number some among my friends. All honour to them, and good luck to them in the struggle they are going to have to hold to their beliefs. But Mr. Mortimer's critics seem to me to miss the real point, which is that good men can really achieve very little under a bad system. Of course, there have been "great changes for the better" in recent years—they are an earnest of what is still to come. But so long as the chief objects of my criticism—the "dignity" of masters, corporal punishment, personal fagging, athletocracy, reactionary social teaching, neglect of the arts, a repressive attitude towards sex, narrowness of curriculum and restriction of personal freedom—so long as these things are believed to be *right*, though there can be welcome palliation, there can never be reform. L. B. PEKIN.

Freie Schulgemeinde, Wickersdorf.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—A detailed reply to Mr. Mortimer would take more space than I can expect you to allow me; so I must content myself with a few categorical assertions.

1. During over thirteen years of teaching in these Public Schools I have never heard a sermon on masturbation.

2. Of some twenty Modern Language masters whom I can call to mind, some, naturally, more efficient than others, none owed his appointment to athletic distinction.

3. I am only one of many who have taught and are teaching the value of just those qualities which Mr. Mortimer declares are not taught but actively discouraged.

I have no desire to overstate my case. I admit that all schools have their faults and that some may have a great many. If Mr. Mortimer is sincere in his attack I hope he will accept an invitation from one of the humbler of his *arrivistes* to a personal discussion of the many problems of my profession. But since I have no desire for advertisement I enclose my card for your and his information alone. ARRIVISTE.

P.S.—I have heard of sublimation.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—During my time at Winchester I was beaten once. There was a paper-chase and, as often happened to me on paper-chases, I had become separated a considerable distance from my fellows. Suddenly the hare, who had doubled on his tracks, crossed the road in front of me. Being "fore-wearied with the chase," I contented myself with a courteous wave of the hand, and took no further action. The hare reported me to the senior prefect, which I still think was wrong: the prefect beat me, which I still think was right.

What would an opponent of corporal punishment have done? Clearly punishment was called for: I had disobeyed a rule, not on moral grounds—if I had thought there was anything morally wrong about compulsory runs, I should (I hope) never have started—but because it was not convenient to obey it. Should the prefect have set me lines? I should have found a favourite passage of Virgil, purchased a sufficiency of sweets, and done them with the feeling that I had scored. Or made me go for another run the next day? He would have had to have come too, or there might have been a short circuit. Or asked a housemaster to talk to me like a father on the enormity of the offence? That would have been effective, if he could have convinced the housemaster that the offence was enormous.

Of the three actors in this tragedy, I cannot believe that the prefect was a sadist, or that the victim has been permanently embittered; however, Mr. Mortimer is welcome to take a low view about the hare. J. B. POYNTON.

The College, Winchester.

WAR GUILT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Harold Temperley calls the League of Nations Union one of the Rip Van Winkles of the war guilt dispute because it has (as he suggests) published a very full extract of Archbishop Temple's sermon at Geneva on Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty, and because (as he suggests) other articles in the Treaty (and not Article 231) contain the war guilt charges. He adds that it is "deplorable" that the Union should have "endorsed" the Archbishop's statement.

The facts are these. On the eve of the opening of the Disarmament Conference, Archbishop Temple preached a sermon at Geneva. It was a great occasion and, if I may say so with deep respect to the Archbishop, it was a great sermon. The Union at once decided to publish it—the whole of it, by the way, and not an extract as Mr. Temperley suggests. In the meantime a controversy had arisen in the press about one passage in the sermon; and, in order to answer his critics, the Archbishop wrote a prefatory note which is now published along with the sermon and which gives anyone who reads it a very clear account of the Archbishop's views.

That is all the part that the League of Nations Union has played in the matter. Why should Mr. Temperley imagine that the League of Nations Union necessarily endorses every statement made in the sermon? As a matter of fact the League of Nations Union as such has never made any pronouncement on the controversy. What the Union *has* done is to publish a very fine sermon, preached on a unique occasion—a sermon whose general tenor coincides with the Union's teaching. As for being the Rip Van Winkle of the dispute, why, the Union has never even gone to sleep! MAXWELL GARNETT.

League of Nations Union.
15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1.

HOW TO STOP WAR

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your last issue a correspondent raised a point of some interest both to pacifists and transport workers. It was suggested that it would be an act of courage to set about organising the transport workers in a refusal to handle Japanese goods, meaning, I suppose, goods consigned to and received from Japan. If the proposal to stand unarmed between combatants had no other merit, it did at least demand some action on the part of those supporting it. In the other case, it would be the transport

workers who would enforce the embargo and not the persons proposing it.

Few pacifists stay to inquire what is involved in such action by transport workers. In most industrial disputes, sooner or later, transport men are involved, for it is customarily assumed by their fellow workers and their comrades on "the left," that they should naturally break their agreements and sacrifice their livelihoods in a spirit of altruism with a view to helping to bring victory to those engaged in the dispute. Often, the transport men have not been consulted before the dispute, may have little knowledge of its merits, are not consulted as to how the dispute shall be carried on, and are ignored in the terms of the settlement. Union funds may be drained and the morale of the organisation damaged. But time and time again, the transport workers have quietly shown their comradeship and testified to workers' solidarity. There are hundreds of transport men who have lost jobs and sacrificed much as a result.

It should be appreciated that certain parts of transport are not easy to organise; conditions of a good standard are hard to get; agreements are difficult to make and national agreements still more difficult to obtain and maintain. But the welfare of transport men depends on these things, and in asking transport workers to do this or that their representatives have a grave responsibility in seeing that the fruits of years of hard and patient effort are not lightly jeopardised and the livelihood of men compromised. In spite of their great contributions to working class solidarity, the workers concerned have often been bitterly assailed by the so-called left when they have refused to be driven into action where no good purpose could have been served and the result was already a foregone conclusion.

These considerations are equally true in the sphere of international action. In addition, transport workers are expected to show the niceties of discrimination as to what may or may not be handled and to flaunt legal obligations imposed on their employers and themselves. It is true that on a number of occasions the dockers, for instance, have taken bold action in regard to some industrial or political issue abroad. While there may be occasions when the transport workers may feel profoundly moved to action, and in my judgment justifiably so, it is pertinent to ask why they should be singled out to take and implement political decisions. Why should they be called on to bear the brunt of consequences from action which ought to be determined by the nation? What is ca' canny in our political life?

Another small point of interest to transport workers is this. If they are to put an embargo on outgoing goods, what about all the workers in other trades and industries and services concerned with those goods before they are placed in transport for the port?

Transport House, S.W.1. A. CREECH JONES.

OBSCENE LIBEL

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—English law having apparently closed her books and uttered her last word on the latest application of the above doctrine, it only remains for some lawyers to thank you for your noble and spirited protest; to observe that there is now only one country in Europe whose criminal code would sanction such proceedings; and to wonder what authors generally (whether in society or out of it) propose to do about the matter.

When one considers that even those men who threw Wilkes and Cobbett, Blake and Leigh Hunt, into gaol would have been the first to laugh out of court (with a sly Rabelaisian oath or jest) the proceedings under discussion, the affair, judged even according to strict precedent, becomes not merely a bad legal joke, but one out of time and out of taste.

One of the greatest of judges who ever adorned the English Bench—or any other Bench—has lately criticised one of the worst aspects of our criminal code. The reform which England to-day stands most in need of is a root and branch reform of the savagest criminal code in Christendom. W. J. WENHAM.

5 Gray's Inn Square, W.C.1.

THE FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I agree with the contention advanced in last week's NEW STATESMAN in the article "The Future of the Post Office" that there are at least five main weaknesses in the present system of Post Office administration. But when the writer of the article states that it is administratively impossible to separate the telephone service from the rest of the postal services, he has surely forgotten that this has been done with conspicuous success by nations whose claims to administrative skill is certainly no greater than our own. Belgium, Sweden and Denmark are among the European countries which enjoy separate control of the telephone; while the U.S.A., where the telephones are controlled by profit-earning corporations, are admittedly far ahead of Great Britain. Actually, about 68 per cent. of the telephone stations in the world form part of the systems provided by private companies.

I am not myself in favour of handing over the telephone in Great Britain to private enterprise, since I think there is a *via media* between private enterprise and parliamentary control which is preferable to both. I should transfer the telephone system to a public corporation, comparable in its status and responsibilities to, say, the Central Electricity Board; and so secure, on the one hand, continuity of policy and freedom from political interference; and, on the other, the predominance of the national interest as opposed to that of financiers or shareholders.

The Smithy, Shenington, Banbury, Oxon. HUBERT PHILLIPS.

A NATIONAL LABOUR PARTY?

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The issue between Mr. Elton and me narrows down to a single and very fundamental one. Does he accept "the assumptions of the movement" or does he not? If he does not, then why go on pretending that he is of it? It is still open to him to collaborate with it, and, as I hope, in the gifted and lively company of Professor Zimmern; but he cannot expect to lay down the policy for it, still less to be regarded as the spokesman of its thought.

I cannot but think that he is very uneasy when confronted with this fundamental test, or else he would not so disingenuously have misrepresented what it was. It is "the assumptions of the movement" that count; it is not a question of accepting the assumptions "of the caucus"—a phrase he substitutes in the vain hope of getting out of his dilemma. Clearly one would not accept the attitude of the leaders towards the National Government if they were not expressing the will of the movement; which, in fact, they are, and Mr. Elton, quite plainly, is not.

This should throw some light on the question which Mrs. Croome, very charmingly, raises. Of course, anybody can see that these assumptions of the movement are not worked out in a body of hard and fast dogma, such as either Communism or the Catholic Church enjoys. But this does not mean that it is not very desirable for us to work out the aims and assumptions of the movement in a more explicit and systematic way than has hitherto been the case. In fact, I am sure she would not disagree with me that the fulfilment of this need is one of the major tasks of the next twenty years. A. L. ROWSE.

1 Brunswick Square, W.C.1.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It is interesting to see Mr. Elton shifting his ground in his reply to Mr. Rowse. He begins with the familiar phrases about "caucuses" and "bosses," but soon passes on to attack Mr. Cole and his associates. Apparently, then, Mr. Cole and his intellectuals are the bosses as well as the Trade Union leaders, with the difference that this gang draws up paper Utopias and does not join Mr. Elton in preaching constructive idealism at the street corners.

May I be permitted to state quite simply the facts about some of the younger generation of Mr. Cole's associates, seeing that Mr. Elton has seen fit to introduce the personal element into this discussion? One would think that in the University of which both Mr. Elton and Mr. Cole are senior members there was ample scope for Mr. Elton's constructive idealism and truly national Socialism as far as the "intellectual classes" were concerned. Instead of preaching Socialism to them, however, Mr. Elton has, during the last seven years at least, allowed them to fall into Mr. Cole's clutches without moving a finger to help them. No doubt Mr. Elton considered these "paper commonwealth" makers poor material for his street-corner team, but, before claiming all the street-corner credit to himself, he might at least have taken the trouble to find out some of the facts.

Of those caught by Mr. Cole between 1925 and 1929, one fought as a Socialist a large backward agricultural area in Dorset in 1929, and five fought other backward areas in 1931. I can assure Mr. Elton that it was the soap box and straight Socialist propaganda on which they relied.

It is true that they fought these elections on the principles accepted by Mr. Elton himself in 1929, but were they more Utopian than those followers of Mr. MacDonald, who to-day tolerate a policy which can find no place for Socialist legislation?

The Labour Party has made its mistakes, but will it be helped towards "unrancorous constructive idealism" by men who attempt to panic the people of this country by exhibiting billion mark notes and talking of "Bolshevism run mad"?

26 Great Ormond Street, W.C.1. E. A. RADICE.

ROAD *v.* RAIL

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The moment when the trade tide does seem to be on the turn is surely the least fortunate to put forward a plea for a substantial increase in the costs of production. Yet in effect that is what the railways are asking from Parliament when they demand, as they are now doing, additional taxation and restrictive regulations upon commercial road transport. There is no product of our factories into which the cost of transport does not enter in some degree: and if that figure is to be increased at the whim of the rival carrying agency the cost of production must be correspondingly greater.

The railways' demand might be regarded as reasonable if motor traffic were not paying its share of our annual road costs. But motor taxation more than foots that particular national bill. Indeed, I find that the memorandum just submitted to the Minister of Transport from the Conference of Motor Organisations states the case with much too great a modesty. It estimates the present annual cost of our roads at £60,000,000 as against £12,000,000 in the days before the motors came. This £12,000,000 must, however, be put at its post-war equivalent, and the railways themselves reckon that costs have gone up 96 per cent. The £12,000,000 therefore becomes £23,500,000, which reduces the extra cost to £36,500,000.

Against that figure we have a yield of £28,000,000 from motor vehicle taxation and a further £31,000,000 from petrol duty, which is, of course, a motor duty pure and simple. In short, the total proceeds of £59,000,000 from motor taxation are already £22,500,000 (and not £11,000,000 as the memorandum states) in excess of the annual cost of our roads which can be partly attributed to motor traffic. Any addition to that taxation would therefore not only be a further burden on British industry, but a gross injustice to motor owners. STRATHSPEY.

Hylton House, Chailey Avenue,
Rottingdean.

THE DOUGLAS SCHEME

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Unless I have quite misunderstood Major Douglas's meaning, his case can be put to a very simple experimental test. Let a Government inquiry be held into the cost (including profit), while maintaining capital, of putting the maximum possible amount of consumable goods on the retail market in a given time and according to an agreed programme. And let an estimate also be made of the total incomes (wages, salaries, and dividends) likely to become available as purchasing power during the same period. If the former figure exceeds the latter, then Major Douglas's case is proved. Surely the present state of our country warrants our submitting any and every proposal which promises amelioration to the most conclusive tests we can devise.

37 Morland Avenue, C. L. HUNT.
Croydon, Surrey.

CONRAD AND EDWARD GARNETT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The misstatements of Mr. Richard Sunne in his article "Books in General," in your issue of March 5th, are as surprising as his critical generalities. He states: "Those of us who love literature find it hard to forgive him (i.e., Mr. Edward Garnett) or Mr. Ford Madox Ford for the harm they did to Conrad by deflecting his genius from the freedom of the Slav to the over-emphasised patterns of the French." This is foolish. Any influence I may have had on Conrad was exercised on behalf of the claims of the Russian novel, and not of the French, as various passages in *Letters From Conrad* (The Nonesuch Press, 1928) show. When Conrad and I came together in 1895 I found that he knew a great deal more about the French naturalists than I did; and several years before I had introduced Mr. Ford Madox Ford to him Conrad had closely studied Maupassant, whose strong influence on him is proved by the tale *The Idiots*, written in May, 1896. Mr. Richard Sunne has probably swallowed whole some of Mr. Ford's fantastic statements about his literary influence on Conrad, statements which I dissected in *The Nation* of December 6, 1924, in a review of Mr. Ford's *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance*. Had Mr. Richard Sunne consulted the files of his own organ he might have saved himself from making an egregious blunder. Secondly, Mr. Richard Sunne accuses me of making "a stupid sneer at Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*." I did nothing of the kind. I said: "it was indeed an error of literary taste, that retelling of the aristocratic pagan hero tales of Ireland in modern peasant speech," thus condensing in two lines a verdict in an article I wrote in *The Academy* thirty years ago, contrasting Miss Eleanor Hull's *The Cuchullin Saga* with Lady Gregory's book. Lastly, I may inform Mr. Richard Sunne that he has missed the target when he states magisterially that, "Mr. O'Faolain derives from Mr. O'Flaherty." Mr. O'Faolain owes a debt, indeed, to one Russian and one Irish author, but the latter is not Mr. O'Flaherty. And with this piece of critical information I will leave Mr. Richard Sunne, "we who love literature," to go on with his guessing.

19 Pond Place, Chelsea, S.W.3. EDWARD GARNETT.

[Richard Sunne writes:

"I accept, of course, Mr. Garnett's denial that he assisted Mr. Hueffer in his efforts to make Conrad write to the naturalistic pattern, and I apologise. I do not, however, see how I, or any reader, could have deduced Mr. Garnett's innocence from Conrad's letters to him. I remember those letters well, and my surprise at the extent of Mr. Garnett's advice to the novelist. I have since re-read the letters, and can find nothing, in the absence of Mr. Garnett's letters to Conrad, that shows how Mr. Garnett's influence was used. It is true that Conrad, writing about *Under Western Eyes*, protests that Mr. Garnett is 'so Russianised that you don't know the truth when you see it—unless it smells of cabbage soup, when it at once secures your profoundest respect'; but here the reference appears to be political and national rather than literary.

"I remain quite impenitent about my criticism of Mr. Garnett's irrelevant taunts of Lady Gregory and Mr. Yeats, though his defence has a winsome *naïveté* that is rather disarming. 'I only condensed what I wrote thirty years ago!' As if a gentleman found picking a lady's pocket were to exclaim, on being accused of theft—'Call that theft! Why, I burgled her home in 1900—and now you call me to order for a blinking little thing like that!' The last paragraph of Mr. Garnett's letter is an admirable instance of the pontifical I-have-spoken tone to which I object, and which coloured his preface to Mr. O'Faolain's stories: Mr. O'Faolain owes a debt 'to one Russian and one Irish author, but the latter is not Mr. O'Flaherty. *And with this piece of critical information. . . .*' But it is not a piece of critical information; it is simply Mr. Garnett's opinion."—Ed., N. S. & N.]

PUTNEY AND SIR WALTER SCOTT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I am interested to see that in noticing my book, *The Laird of Abbotsford*, your reviewer indicates that a new test should be applied to biographers. In effect, she suggests to your readers that since I am no lady, do not know what a "real" gentleman is, am ignorant of life, ignorant of letters, and probably speak with a suburban accent, I should be pilloried. Let me grant her premises with alacrity, but is the inference to be drawn from them that no one but a perfect lady or a perfect gentleman should write about Sir Walter Scott?

People like myself, who speak (and I suppose write?) in the easily recognised patois of Putney, and who display "arch vacuity of standards in life and letters," sometimes stray into the preserves of literature, but seldom, if ever, have the objections to their presence therein been expounded to them with such engaging frankness by any keeper of the sacred precincts. My "refinement" is such, however, that I cannot refrain from apologising to Miss Mackenzie for having irritated her sufficiently by my presentation of Sir Walter Scott to cause her to try to scotch my "suburban" prose. Leopards do not always want to change their spots, and in the name of the plebs of Putney I really must protest against this high-brow interference. Even the "barber's assistants" in this district are up in arms. Our pride may not be that of Scottish descent, but we cherish a certain low-brow conceit of our own. UNA POPE-HENNESSY.

"Waverley," 24 Carlton Road,
Putney, N.W.16.

Miscellany

A FIGHT TO A FINISH

TONY and Jim were glad that Tony's father and mother were out for the afternoon, and that Nanny was busy in the work room, because that left the entire house, garden and playhouse open to them. The playhouse stood in relation to the house like a baptistry to a Gothic cathedral at the other end of the garden; and the two infants soon left the house for the other, with its ampler room for noise. Somehow it called to them all the while they were in the house, until its voice became high and persistent; and they left their games to run out into the open, where its finger beckoned them across the lawn. Once within those large, bare walls their din came back to them with a more natural sound—as though softened by four years of intimate association.

How the game which so soon changed into a fight began nobody knew. Even the walls themselves had grown so accustomed to every game that they were startled by no new sound. It was really a game all through, but it was a game throughout which Tony whirled through more sensations than ever in his short life before. Somehow Jim became so entrapped by the handkerchief round his neck that Tony found he could wheel and steer his little companion about like a ship—at will. They had never planned anything; but had often before skated round this game, and now it had consummated itself. Jim had suddenly become a beast in Tony's power. The walls gave back their loud enjoyment.

Both laughed at first—laughed uproariously at the strange mould into which chance had suddenly cast their game—laughed until the friendly walls picked up the echoes and laughed with them. Then Jim stopped laughing suddenly—or, rather, was stopped—because the knot in the handkerchief snuffed out his laugh like a candle. So Tony put out all his strength in the game, and hauled Jim about after him at will. It was not long before the other gathered all his strength for the contest, and Tony felt it weighed against his own. Still laughing a little and panting, he gave back his own with increasing purpose. He knew he was the stronger.

At last he felt that he was master of the game, and the other became weaker and weaker, as though responding in the same language; but Tony would not stop the game. All the laugh had gone out of him now; but another feeling was rising higher and higher in its place—a pleasant feeling whose pleasure increased as it mounted to the surface. He had never known what it was like to swell with pride before; but now he seemed to swell in every part of him with an exultation that was rooted in a sharp pain from which he could not and would not escape.

Once before that terrorising pleasure had assailed him, and the picture of that memory blazed up in his mind for one moment—leaving behind in it a burn like a stain. He had gone into the yard with Stephen, the farm boy, to watch him kill a chicken. The chicken had been hung up by its crabby legs, and Stephen had cut its throat as calmly as he would have cut his bread. The bird had not complained; but had just hung there while four beads of blood fell from its mouth into the nettles. Tony had felt the cold steel of that blade go like a razor through his own throat every five minutes for days after; but he had stood there and watched it then with the blood singing and banging in his ears—only waiting for the pale silence to burst into some awful cry that never came.

Now he found himself on top of his friend in the playhouse with the same song in his blood and the same expectancy waiting in his soul to break the spell and restore everything as it had been before—for a strange sense pervaded him that everything was not as it had been before. Something was wrong—was it Jim's voice? Something had suddenly gone out in the room like the light. However, the fight was finished, and Tony had only to untie Jim for him to sit up and admit that he was beaten. Jim fell under Tony's small weight like a parcel more than a human body, and for one instant Tony thought he looked all funny and ruffled like a dead bird he had once picked up.

When he had untied the handkerchief he thought poor Jim looked more like a dead bird every minute. He did not speak; but Tony did not expect this thing to speak. It was not at all like Jim. It was not his colour or even altogether his shape. Tony just watched it, kneeling on one knee, and thought of the dead bird he had picked up. Had it been black? No—it had been blue—like the body on the floor beneath him. He had better go and find Nanny. She might be able to explain it all to him. He knew he had made some mistake, and he felt horribly frightened.

He knew that something had gone out in the room quite suddenly, as though it had become empty or dark. Something had suddenly changed the whole world. He got up and went quickly out into the afternoon. Somehow he disliked going out into the sun. He was ashamed of something; and when he was ashamed of anything he disliked going out into the sun. It was so like an eye from which you could not hide anything; but he could not go back into the playhouse without Jim now. How his heart warmed at the thought of Jim, and how much he would have liked to go anywhere with him then! Perhaps if he looked for him now he might find him somewhere in the garden.

Then he heard Nanny calling him in to tea. As the voice came nearer he receded a little. He did not want Nanny to find him. He felt guilty, and did not want Nanny to see him—so he hid in a bush and would not answer her. She passed close to him, but did not go into the playhouse. Presently she turned back into the house—still calling their names in turn. When the voice had completely died away Tony crept out and went back into the playhouse. The figure on the floor was stiffer now and terrified him—terrified him by its likeness to Jim.

Suddenly he went stiff himself. Was he going to become like that too? Had Jim turned into a doll, and was he going to be changed into a doll now? Yes, he felt his hair grow solid on his head. His blood seemed to change to a solid in his body. He was going bald like a doll. He was going to be a doll with a hole in its head. He knew the doll he was going to be. Could he stop it? All the fear of other people had gone out of him now. Everything was resolved into one hideous panic. He was changing. Would he be in time to stop it if he shouted? His voice broke from him like a gong, and then broke everything in him; and he rushed out into the garden—crying, sobbing and yelling as he ran into the house.

ASHLEY SAMPSON.

COMMUNISM AND SOVIET LITERATURE

IF one asked a Russian to explain why so little good literature is being written in Soviet Russia at the present day, he would probably retort indignantly: "But it isn't true! We have a great many interesting new writers. You should read them." A Russian in a better position to appreciate the "bourgeois" point of view in this matter might, however, make some such answer as this: "To tell you the truth, we haven't a great deal of time for literature just now. People write, of course—an extraordinary number of people write nowadays. But literature and art and fine

writing and the rest, as you individualist Europeans understand them, are of no importance to us at the moment. The Five Year Plan takes up most of our energy and interest. Literature must wait."

In point of fact, Soviet literature has been waiting most noticeably during the past three or four years. Anybody who has tried to follow its progress will have observed a marked change in quality since 1928 (when the Plan was introduced) or even a little earlier. Numerous historical, sociological and economic researches have been allocated to various writers under the educational programme of the Plan; but, although works of fiction on particular themes are apparently commissioned from established authors, the Plan makes no direct provision for imaginative literature. And whereas the standard of literary achievement in the years after the Civil War was, all things considered, fairly high, the last three years or so have produced very little of merit as merit is reckoned by ordinary European standards. There are certainly crowds of new writers, whose output, in view of the "paper famine," is surprisingly profuse; but nine-tenths of what is being written to-day falls outside the scope of conventional æsthetic judgment. From the ordinary European standpoint, that is, it is negligible as literature; from the Communist-materialist point of view about art, its value is essentially propagandist.

Everything else apart, the Communist considers it an enormous gain, of course, that the masses are becoming articulate. He welcomes the advent of large numbers of proletarian and peasant poets (Obradovitch, Gerasimov, Sadofiev, Kluyer, etc.), regardless of the merit of their poetry; and in most cases it is left to the foreigner, however much he, too, may approve in principle, to note the inadequacy of this poetry. Still, the artistic failings of a generation of writers newly delivered from illiteracy need occasion no surprise. What may seem surprising is that the writers who had previously established themselves with good work of one kind or another have in the last few years either been silent or produced work of a curiously halting and irresolute kind.

One may be blinded, of course, by bourgeois prejudices in favour of bourgeois art, but at the moment there does not seem to be a single novelist, for instance, in Soviet Russia—the *émigrés* have long ceased to count—from whom first-rate work can be expected. This is not meant as a sweeping criticism of Soviet talent. Far from it. The statement implies above all the urgency of what might be called extra-literary needs in Soviet Russia to-day—the compulsion upon the novelist to divert his energy into educative rather than purely creative channels. Such a state of affairs is not likely to be permanent, but its present effect deserves to be noted. Take the case of the leading spirits of RAPP (the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), the quality of whose work has deteriorated in a very pronounced way in recent years. Or take the case of Gorky, whose virtues are much misunderstood here, whose earliest fiction is much his best, who has written some splendid volumes of reminiscences, with which he returned to favour, after years of eclipse, before the Revolution, and whose latest work, as evidenced in the *Klim Samghin* trilogy, is ambitious and dull. With the exception of Gorky, Sergeyev-Tzensky, whose *Transfiguration* (which is unobtainable) is said to be a masterpiece, and who continues to write interesting short stories, and of Alexis Tolstoy, an attractive but wayward author, hardly any of the remaining pre-Revolutionary writers are on the active list. And, as regards the specifically Soviet writers, the plain truth is that earnestness, idealism and a passionate belief that art is propaganda or something like it are not enough. The quality of their recent work may be guaged by the latest novels of such writers are Pilniak, Lebedinsky, Leonov, Fedin, and others. Soviet critics have discussed these novels weightily enough—a critic has to be weighty about something; but the foreigner, while admiring Leonov's fidelity to "the general line" of the Party, finds *Sot* lacking in an elementary sense of human issues. So with Lebedinsky's *Birth of a Hero*, which created a prolonged stir and was violently denounced for its unsatisfactory ideology; anybody here acquainted with Lebedinsky's earlier work will shake his head over a weak and disappointing performance. There are, as a matter of fact, about fifty English novelists who produce a better novel every year without turning a hair.

What is the reason for this state of affairs? Why, apart from the educative bias incumbent upon the serious Soviet novelist to-day, has novel-writing apparently gone to pieces, or at any rate retreated behind a cover of party enthusiasm, since the Plan was introduced? There are several contributory explanations of an obvious kind. In the first place, there is the censorship, an indispensable tool of dictatorship, which silences many varieties of social criticism, previously tolerated, in the interests of the whole vast experiment of national planning. Secondly, it is possible that cultural isolation from the rest of Europe is beginning to have a damaging effect. Thirdly, the emotional stimulus of the Revolution itself and of the Civil War is wearing off; Soviet Russia has got down to brass tacks, and is in deadly earnest. Finally—and this is the crux of the matter—the Soviet experiment is in the throes of cultural revolution. Proletarian culture is still immature, but it has gone the whole way in positing new values for literature. So far as the novel is concerned, a sort of hitch seems to have occurred in developing the application of the materialist ideology of art. A poet like Pasternak can continue his elaborate experimentation with poetic forms, and others like Demyan Bedny, declaiming sincerely enough in the style of Mayakovsky, though without his odd raucous talent, can continue to hymn the praises of turbine engines and blast furnaces; but the novel is another matter. The novel cannot escape from everyday emotional experience. The Revolution produced some fine novels, the Civil War even finer ones—for instance, Serafimovitch's *The Iron Stream* (the fighting in the Ukraine), Fadeyev's *Devastation* (the fighting in Siberia), Babel's stories of Budeny's Cossacks. There is no longer an opportunity for novels of this kind. Even the occasion for a novel like Gladkov's *Cement*, not a first-rate piece of work, perhaps, but one which brings the heroic and optimistic spirit of the defence of the Revolution into the processes of reconstruction, has passed; in an up-to-date novel like *Sot*, this spirit is dissipated in a thousand details of economic planning and an accelerating tempo of industrialisation. Novelists to-day must find their inspiration in the routine of Socialist construction, the collectivisation of agriculture, the polytechnisation of education, the control figures for industry. The stimulus of a Communist Revolution has been replaced by the glory attaching to the Order of Lenin and the title of "A Hero of Labour."

The Five Year Plan, after all, is, in its broader aspect, an attempt to shorten the transition period between the proletarian dictatorship and the establishment of a Communist order of society. The present theory of the Bolsheviks seems to be, first, that the "conquest of technique" is more fundamental than art in this period of transition; secondly, that the more politicalised literature becomes the better. The increased productivity of mills and factories, backed by organised technical education and a "proletarian world-view," offers more promise of complete Socialism than free criticism, individual artistic expression and the rest. In any case nothing must be allowed to distract attention from the needs and problems of national economic planning. Hence follows the necessity for disciplining and organising "the literary front" in much the same way that the Communist Party itself is disciplined and organised.

How long will the transition period last? Marx, of course, did not know, and the Bolsheviks do not pretend to be able to say. However long, it would seem to be unreasonable to expect a great deal of what is commonly regarded as good

literature from Soviet Russia in the near future. Distinctive proletarian art belongs to the more distant future. In the meantime it may be well to remember, in fairness to the Soviet cultural revolution, that no society has yet succeeded in making the best of both worlds at the same time.

R. D. CHARQUES.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Real Iago

THE performance of *Othello* at the Old Vic (which will be transferred to Sadler's Wells next week) is worth seeing for several reasons. First because the simplicity of the production, as is usual at the Old Vic, allows the audience to concentrate on the two most important things, Shakespeare and the acting. Next because Mr. Wilfred Walter is a notably satisfying Othello. He is fine in appearance, and so convinces us of his inherent nobility of character and of the insanity into which he is driven by Iago's lies that our sympathy is increasingly held to the end, which is the most difficult task that Othello has to accomplish. Not only Mr. Walter but the whole company managed to emphasise that Othello is a stranger, and that that is the real reason of his tragic mistakes. And, lastly, this performance of *Othello* should be seen because of the really exciting interpretation of Iago given by Mr. Ralph Richardson. Iago is one of the most difficult characters in the Shakespeare theatre; and Mr. Richardson's rendering is the most convincing that I have ever seen. He makes Iago not only the "simple soldier man," the honest, kindly boon companion whom we must trust even as his friends do, whose sympathy for Desdemona is moving in its very clumsiness, but shows us that when he schemes he is never more than callous, and small-minded. The noble words that Shakespeare gives to him have led us to think that he is a man of fine intellect; then we wonder how he can be so stupid as well as so evil. But his actions are possible if he is a man who is only practising low cunning; and what more than low cunning is the trick of the handkerchief, or his realisation of how natural jealousy would be to an alien, an Oriental, suddenly finding the very centre of his heart fixed in the easy life of Venice? And how stupid as well as cruel is his treatment of Emilia!

The Iago of Mr. Richardson would not have exclaimed: "Nor poppy nor mandragora," but neither would the Iago of Shakespeare, save that Shakespeare rarely resists the temptation to give his characters poetry worthy of their situations, if not possible to their characters. Mr. Richardson's soliloquies are excellently colloquial. Miss Edith Evans, evidently trying to emphasise that Othello is a stranger to her, plays the undressing scene on too dazed and low a note—she would surely rally a little more to try to cheer Desdemona and the speech on husbands is so like in spirit to Restoration drama that we longed for more of the airs that charmed us in *The Way of the World*. Emilia's death is almost too realistically done; it is admirable acting and shows Miss Evans's real power, but if she would only fall a little up the steps leading to Desdemona's bed and lie facing the audience, we could hear her last words, in spite of her gruesome suggestion of someone whose lungs are filling with blood.

A New Aldwych Farce.

What Mr. Ben Travers would do without the Aldwych cast it is horrible to imagine. They have always served him as accomplices rather than interpreters, and Mr. Ralph Lynn's monocle and Miss Mary Brough's raucous interjections, with all the other personal quips and gags, are at least half the fun. This time we can but remember Mr. Tom Walls, who is away from this play. To conceive all the parts in terms of your actors and yet to keep some sort of pattern, as Mr. Travers does, would form a fine puzzle for most playwrights, but his writing is never out of character, and all his best jokes seem to belong naturally to the people who make them. A West End jeweller's with its shop-assistants, shopwalker and night watchman, was a bright idea for a setting. Mr. Lynn, in particular, reacts well in the new surroundings. Crooks and private detectives contribute to a story not too impossible to be funny. Miss Margaretta Scott and Miss Marjorie Corbett, while fitting in well with the seasoned members of the Aldwych cast, still seem to have talents in hand for use on future occasions.

A Deserving Venture

On the 6th February we commended that excellent piece of natural comedy, *The Last Coupon*. This thoroughly English play, acted with spirit and intelligence, has now moved to the Kingsway Theatre, where two performances are given each night. The prices are well below the ordinary West-end prices and the production and acting up to the best standards. We hope the play will have here a great success.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Friday, March 18th—

Prof. A. J. Toynbee on "The Turks," University College, 5.30.
Sir William Beveridge on "Problems of Currency," B.B.C., 7.5.
Dr. Georg Groddeck on "Organic Symbolism," London School of Hygiene, 8.
Adila Fachiri, Violin Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Saturday, March 19th—

Exhibition of Labour Conditions in Soviet Russia, London School of Economics, March 19th to 24th.
St. John Passion, Southwark Cathedral, 3.

Sunday, March 20th—

Pryns Hopkins on "Religion and the Family," Conway Hall, 11.
"Alone," Film Society, Tivoli, 2.30.
London Symphony Orchestra, Albert Hall, 3.
Griller String Quartet, Conway Hall, 6.30.
Grotrian Music Society Concert, Grotrian Hall, 9.
"Playground," Garrick.
"Cloudy with Showers," St. Martin's.
"Romeo and Juliet" (O.U.D.S.), New.
"The Trial of Jesus," Everyman.

Monday, March 21st—

Sir Edward Davson on "The Empire's Opportunity at Ottawa," Royal Empire Society, 8.
Dr. Georg Groddeck on "Symbolism in Disease," Institute of Medical Psychology, 51, Tavistock Square, 8.30.
Eleanor Marshall, Song Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.45.

Tuesday, March 22nd—

Henri van Etten, "A Frenchman replies to Commander King-Hall," Friends House, 1.20.
Beredin String Quartet, Grotrian Hall, 8.15.
"See Naples and Die," Little Theatre.
Dr. Georg Groddeck on "The Biology of Words," London School of Hygiene, 8.
"I Lived with You," Prince of Wales.

Wednesday, March 23rd—

The Deutsche Verein, Goethe Centenary Celebration, Aeolian Hall, 8.30.

Thursday, March 24th—

"Miss Hook of Holland," Daly's.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THERE are moments when I envy the methods of those popular lecturers who can, with an unblushing simplicity, continue to inform their hearers that " to ' e-ducate ' is to draw out, not to put in "; that " to ' economise ' is to apply rules to keeping house "; that a poet is " one who makes something "; and that " atonement simply means an ' at-one-ment.' " One smiles at the persistent hopefulness of those who believe that our mental muddles will be clarified if we used words more precisely; but I wonder whether we who have grown so abominably careless about words are not more ridiculous. It is true that language grows by changing; but words in a continuous condition of metamorphosis become useless for any purpose. You cannot even be really vague unless you know what your words mean. Some neologisms I still cannot tolerate; why deflect the word picture from its traditional meaning, when we have for the device which that word is so often now compelled to designate, the perfectly good words " movie " or " flick "? People who prefer to be saved the unaccustomed exercise of careful thinking will always accuse of pedantry their less idle acquaintances; and if an accusation of pedantry does not settle the matter, it is followed up by one of intolerance. Sometimes, of course, a certain looseness in phraseology has a picturesque quality which excuses it; no one to-day objects to the leader of the Salvation Army using the title of General, though, I suppose, there would be a good deal of opposition if a religious leader called himself Duke, or Prince, or King. The assumption of titles, however, in a day when they are regarded as picturesque survivals, does not lead to any serious misunderstanding; the misuse of other words can have very unpleasant consequences.

* * *

This occurred to me as I was reading Mr. Howard Robinson's excellent account of *Pierre Bayle the Sceptic* (Milford, 28s.). What a trail of ill-feeling, misinterpretation, bigotry, bitterness, hatred and distrust has come from the abuse of that good word sceptic. There is hardly a thinker of eminence to whom it may not be applied, from Socrates to Santayana; more than ninety out of a hundred philosophers go wrong when they abandon their scepticism, for it takes a very rare mind to be positive and right. It is distressingly easy to be positive and wrong. I know no more alarming sign of a certain mental infirmity than the decay of scepticism in so many branches of thought, than the readiness of men to present as proved conclusions the most hazardous hypotheses, and to resent any departure from the rigid unorthodoxies that happen to be fashionable. Here the influence of the Russian experiment has been greater than would have been conceivable had not the rest of the world been so weary of its own weariness. To read Lenin's statements on religion, so childish, so completely devoid of any metaphysical ability, so ignorant of the philosophies of his own day, is to realise once more that the man of power may attain his position by accident, not by any inherent greatness of mind or imagination, which can alone exalt the philosopher or the artist. It is unkind of the friends of Soviet Russia to print such a volume of extracts as *Lenin on Religion* (Martin Lawrence, 1s.), so hopelessly old-fashioned, so remote in its arguments from the scientific or philosophic world of to-day. What shocks me most is Lenin's complete abandonment of scepticism. Here, of course, his devotees have followed him. Doubt and denial are the two great sins in Soviet Russia to-day; and true scepticism may always lead to either.

* * *

It is clear from Bayle's life and from his great dictionary that he, no more than Erasmus, whose mind his most resembles, did not believe that scepticism necessarily involved a man in a condition of perpetual doubt or denial. His own denials are much more of temperament than strictly intellectual conviction, and are conditioned partly by his period, and partly by his personal religious experience. The son of a French Huguenot minister, in 1669, when he was twenty years old, he became a Catholic, and a year later retracted. For a man to do this in the France of Louis XIV, the last advocate of the forced conversion, showed a rare intellectual honesty. Bayle's sensitiveness may be doubted; he may be accused of rather too eager an enjoyment of his own insatiable curiosity; he was a traveller who too often forgot that all journeys should have a destination, a man who loved distraction more than construction—but when all this is said, it is refreshing to meet this eager, inquiring spirit, this mind which may have forgotten truth but never embalmed it, in the France of Bossuet and Rancée, of the Jesuits and the Jansenists.

* * *

Mr. Robinson, who is an American scholar, has written a book that Bayle himself would have appreciated. It is lively, judicious, eulogistic, and critical. He claims rightly that to read his subject's books is to be impressed

> with the yeoman service Bayle rendered in softening the temerity of propositions, in removing spectres, and in unloading from many shoulders a huge bundle of comparatively unimportant convictions and burdensome superstitions. . . . Bayle's scepticism was applied with unusual fairness and impartiality by a brain that was extraordinarily nimble in running the errands of reason.

Bayle was one of the first important critics to apply an historical method to the study of the Holy Bible, and insist on a differentiation between the historical and religious aspects of that collection, and also on the very varied levels of the book's spiritual contents.

> The Holy Scripture relates the facts only historically, and therefore everyone is at liberty to pass a judgement upon them.

So he writes in his article on David. His greatest influence, however, was in the wider field of moral philosophy. He is never tired of insisting in article after article in the great Dictionary that men of false religions or none may be good men, and that therefore " such a belief as morality for its own sake was not untenable." Mr. Robinson speculates at rather too much length on the details of Bayle's own theological position. He was not really a theologian. He disliked the excessive rationalism that overwhelmed Christian theology, whether Catholic or Protestant; and while he had no skill in scientific theology, he had no tendency to the mysticism which was its only alternative. He was not, I think, so naturally a cynic as was Gibbon, who owes much to Bayle; his improprieties and impolitenesses are less malicious than the historian's, have, indeed, a gamin quality which reminds the reader that Bayle is the fellow-countryman of Rabelais and Voltaire.

* * *

What a generous home for Bayle's type of scepticism, genial without weakness, exuberant yet intelligent, foolish only by a kind of delighted excess is Mr. Mencken's review, *The American Mercury*. I do not know whether this lively periodical has the circulation it should in this country. Though transatlantic follies are his target, Mencken gets in under European armour, too. There is some excellent work in the March number—an essay of Hergesheimer's on the strange craft of letters, and some fine punching comments by the editor on democracy in the land of freedom. In *Americana* the credulities of the day are penned neatly for our observation. This month we have a list of the subjects taught at the University of Bio-Psychology, Chattanooga, Tennessee; they include Cosmic Bio-Psycho-Dynamics, Personality Orientation, the Telekinetic Senses, Bio-Psycho-Analysis, the Laws of Relativity, the Cryptic Sciences, and the Infra-Conscious Intelligence. O Boy! O Bayle!

RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

Fantastic Traveller. By MAUDE MEAGHER. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

The Lost Glen. By NEIL M. GUNN. Porpoise Press. 7s. 6d.

The Bud of the Spring. By MARY FRANCES MCHUGH. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

Isabel. By GERALD GOULD. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

David Martin was a lotus-eater. His fantastic travels were of the mind. Miss Meagher writes of him with enthusiasm and understanding, exhibiting in the process her own very fertile fancy and her literary skill. She takes as her text a passage in one of Keats's letters:

> Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury.

And her whole novel may be said to be an elaborate illustration of this idea. David is an incorrigible dreamer, self-sufficient and solitary. He cultivates the habit assiduously, refines a method and invents a technique: it is the only reality in his life. Much of the incidental characterisation is excellent, and gives promise of a better book than *Fantastic Traveller* proves to be. The theme is too much laboured; Dreamy Davie becomes a bore; and much as we dislike (or learn to dislike) the two women who successively seek to invade his solitude and take absolute possession of him, we cannot help sharing their impatience. And, indeed, we have far more excuse for impatience; for it is we, not they, who are asked to follow the meanderings of his fancy. But the book is clearly the product of an exceptional mind; and if it is the author's first novel, her second is likely to be a great deal better.

Ewan Macleod is another solitary, though of a very different type; and his author takes us again, as he did in *Morning Tide*, to a wild Scottish coast. Ewan, the son of humble parents, comes home in disgrace from the University to which he has been sent by his rich, ungenerous uncle. This return, with the events of the few succeeding days, occupies the brilliant first part of the novel. The subsequent parts show Ewan working as a gillie, seeking and avoiding the girl he is in love with, being fascinated by Clare Marlowe (his employer), and nursing an obscure bitterness against the world in general. It is a tantalising story, rich in suspense but ultimately unsatisfying. One gets the impression that the author himself lost his way in it. He plodded along in the hope of a revelation, and at last, no revelation being vouchsafed to him, he decided to bring the thing to a violent conclusion by murdering Colonel Hicks. "Plodded," however, is not the right word; for Mr. Gunn's writing gives continuous pleasure. His style alone—since a truly admirable style cannot proceed but from a distinguished mind—would make anything he wrote worth reading.

There remain Miss McHugh and Mr. Gould. *The Bud of the Spring* is a quiet chronicle of boyhood. If it is fiction, it belongs to that school of fiction which aims at giving its products the particularity and monotony of real life. I read it, not without interest and admiration, but tantalised by the cheating expectation that in a little while the story would begin. But no, it rambles on, quietly, sketchily: the not very intimate synopsis of a boy's life. *Isabel* stands at the opposite extreme. No one could suspect this novel of being anything but fiction. It is written with Mr. Gould's customary clarity and intelligence; it raises some interesting questions; it propounds what is to my mind the unimpeachable doctrine of sexual freedom. But—and this is surprising in view of Mr. Gould's quality as a poet—it seldom rises above the level of good journalism. I hinted (perhaps mistakenly) that Mr. Gunn, in *The Lost Glen*, had not quite made up his mind about the theme of his book. Mr. Gould seems to have fallen into the opposite error. He has made up his mind; he has made up the minds of his characters; and they have, alas, no minds of their own. As individuals they do not exist. Invented, not created, each is monotonously true to its formula. They do not (for the most part) converse with each other: they make speeches; and it is perfectly evident that their speeches were written for them by Mr. Gould. No sooner has one made these statements, however, than one begins to think of possible exceptions to them, remembering that Arthur Benson, for example, has some semblance of life. I am anxious to make it clear that it is not their eccentricity, whether of psychology or behaviour, that makes these characters, in general, unconvincing. Arthur Benson begins by being in love with two sisters: he needs them both equally. The Isabel of the title is at once a saint and an amorist: she has a passion not for getting but for giving love, where it is needed; and this generosity leads her to have a succession of lovers. There is nothing incredible in either of these propositions. Isabel is the most significant character in the book, and I am inclined to wish that the story, or at least the greater part of it, had been told through her consciousness. There is some inconsistency in her portrayal. At one point she is represented as living in the light of a profound intuition, with little or no talent for theorising; at another we find her holding forth in the best lecture-room style. It is true that she professes herself very reluctant to expound her view of love; she is not, she says, a woman of words. "Words, aren't *my* strong line—but they're Leonard's. I've always known what I thought, but he's taught me how to think it." Now this, I submit, is mere face-saving on Mr. Gould's part. He wanted at this point to give the theory behind Isabel's practice, and he resolved that Isabel herself should expound it. If such exposition was not in character with Isabel—well, her character must be adjusted accordingly. So we hear her reciting her piece:

> "If the present system appeared to be justified by results," she said, "I should still feel it was morally wrong. I should still feel it was a giving of promises that shouldn't be given, and a forcing of emotions that can't be forced, and a denial of the central human spirit. But it *doesn't* appear to be justified by results. It has filled the world with deception and tyranny and cruelty and unhappiness. I don't argue that my way of living has made everybody happy. It hasn't. But neither has any other way. By that test we arrive nowhere. But I keep on coming back to the fact that I reject the test altogether. You say I have caused disaster. My reply is not that virtuous and monogamous and possessive wives and mothers are causing disasters all round us all the time, though that would be a perfectly sufficient reply, and a perfectly true one: it is simply that I have no choice. I hurt Arthur because he wouldn't have me on the only terms I could offer him—the terms of freedom. I hurt Henry because he couldn't take what I had to give. If I hurt Leonard it will be because he is false to his own convictions. . ."

Later in the same conversation Isabel remarks (she is talking to her sister Rosamund): "Jealousy is the enemy we've got to kill, the devil we've got to cast out. It never hurt *me* that Arthur loved *you*. And Leonard can love as many women as he likes. If he really loves them, it will only enrich his nature

"BP" PLUS

Plus what?

Plus a little something some others haven't got

and enlarge his spirit and make him a better lover of myself." Isabel's conduct I do not complain of; Isabel's doctrine I regard as admirable common sense; but Isabel's conversational style on this occasion (and it is characteristic of the book, though not of herself) has the effect of turning a novel into a piece of pamphleteering. I have little doubt that Mr. Gould will be lauded for his skill as a novelist and reprobated for his (apparent) sympathy with Isabel's point of view: which, in my opinion, is precisely the reverse of what he deserves. GERALD BULLETT.

A ROMANTIC PATRIOT

Robert Emmet. By RAYMOND W. POSTGATE. Secker. 10s. 6d.

I hope Mr. Postgate will forgive me if I dwell on what I have found most interesting in his brilliant biography of Robert Emmet, namely on Robert Emmet himself, for the book actually is more the story of a tragic adventure than a character study, and the adventure is composed of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, what led up to it, and its strange and fantastic sequel. It is a chapter of history which, as told by Mr. Postgate, reads like vivid and enthralling fiction—a novel of plots, counterplots, spies, heroes and villains. It is a crowded chapter, filled with portraits, and the portrait of Robert Emmet suffers from the foreshortening such a scheme demands. He appears as a tantalisingly enigmatic figure, of his private life we get hardly a glimpse, and yet what is most strongly suggested by the little we do see of it is just that, in contrast with his fellow patriots, his private life was unusually important, and must have been strange, very likely beautiful, and certainly profound. But Mr. Postgate had to place his figure in its historical background, had to give an account of all that led up to the foundation of the United Irishmen, the stage is thronged with extraordinary persons, and events follow one another thick and fast. He has accomplished his task well; the details are there, yet the dense mass of material has been carefully sifted, and the story in it emerges clearly and moves rapidly on to its tragic ending.

Perhaps, then, a more intimate study of Robert Emmet would, in these circumstances, have been impossible, but certainly to a writer of fiction he appeals as a character who ought essentially to be presented from the inside. And Robert was, and still is, difficult to know. The youngest son of a family of seventeen, he remained a puzzle to his own people, though a puzzle devoid of interest. They saw him merely as a delicate and plain little boy, not very clever and not very responsive; in fact, a little boy whose chief characteristics were obstinacy and silence. Nobody dreamt that these qualities concealed a passionate imagination and a capacity for unselfish devotion as rare as it was pure. His father, Dr. Emmet, was disappointed in his youngest son, and even after Robert had left school and gone to Trinity College, Dublin, expressed doubts about his future to a friend.

> Robert has a boyishness of air and an apparent unfitness for society—or an unwillingness to engage in active intercourse with men of the world. You might live with him for ten years, in the same house, in the same room, even, and never discover what he thought about himself at all.

We do not now know what he thought about himself, and what others thought of him is little to the purpose. Perhaps he did not give them much chance, though doubtless he would have been more confidential had he found the right person. His nature was dreamy, passionate and ingenuous, but it was intensely reticent and self-contained. Here is the only anecdote of his schooldays his parents preserved.

> He had been occupying himself with amateur chemical experiments during one afternoon and late in the evening sat down to solve a complex problem in algebra, biting his nails as was his habit when engaged in thought. Before long he was seized by a horrible pain in the stomach. He realised that he had been unconsciously sucking corrosive sublimate off his fingers. All the family were in bed by now; rather than disturb his father he went to the study, pulled out the Medical Encyclopædia, which he found recommended chalk as an antidote to corrosive sublimate poisoning. He went down to the coach-house, where he remembered to have seen some chalk, and swallowed this almost wholly ineffective remedy. In the morning his face "was as small and yellow as an orange" at the breakfast table. He had suffered excruciating pains all night and endeavoured to divert his attention by solving algebraical problems.

As he grew older Robert altered little. We do not know exactly when the great vision of his life took definite shape, but it was there when he was a youth at Trinity; and he anticipated expulsion for sedition by himself removing his name from the register. After all, in 1798, when the Rebellion failed and Lord Edward Fitzgerald died in Newgate Jail, Robert was still only a boy of nineteen, though already he had acted as confidential messenger and agent. He was only twenty-five when he reconstructed the entire plot, failed in his turn, and was betrayed and hanged.

It is said that he could have escaped; that it was his love for Sarah Curran, a daughter of the famous lawyer, which held him chained to Dublin. We get no more than a glimpse of this unhappy love affair, clandestine and hopeless from the first, but what we do see of it is informed with the same spirit of passionate devotion and idealism.

It is all boyish and wildly romantic. So is the part Emmet played in his rebellion. But he must have had a spiritual genius, a visible integrity, for he inspired confidence and gained a following.

> Emmet had five depots of arms at least in Dublin. Probably he had more. He rarely visited any for more than an hour or so, appearing and disappearing suddenly and without warning. He lived a peculiar, secret and flitting life which appealed to his sense of the romantic. Some of his devices, indeed, read almost like a youthful game. He filled the Patrick Street house with secret cupboards, hidden passages and false bottoms. His father's old country house at Miltown, just outside Dublin, he turned almost into a Crazy Castle. A square trap door was cut in the ceiling of the hall, so that if police came up the stairs to arrest him he could drop through behind their backs and escape by the front door. Elsewhere there was a hidden cupboard in which he could crouch, and thirty-three years later his biographer was shown a curious arrangement of pulleys and ropes, whose purpose was by that time obscure. He even dug a secret passage under the lawn, with a hidden entrance.

From such things as these we can only construct an imaginary portrait, and what Robert Emmet might have become in happier times we cannot guess. His last speech is a marvellous example of great oratory, but his verses are devoid of talent. At least he had beauty and nobility of character and spirit: he was young and fine and true and utterly disinterested: his life itself was a kind of poem. FORREST REID.

NEW PALESTINE

England in Palestine. By NORMAN BENTWICH. Kegan Paul, 12s. 6d.

Mr. Bentwich has spent more than fifteen years in Palestine—nearly three years on military service and thirteen as legal adviser to the Palestine Administration. He has written extensively on international affairs and he has a considerable reputation as a jurist, as witness his recent appointment to the Chair of International Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has, therefore, quite exceptional qualifications for his attempt to produce a kind of counterpart to Milner's *England in Egypt*. The task was well worth undertaking. In the recent spate of books on Palestine there is none which gives so concisely a connected account of the actual course of events since the British occupation; there is certainly none which explains so clearly the working of the administrative machine. Mr. Bentwich does not confine himself to Palestine in the more limited sense of the term, but deals just as fully with Trans-Jordan. He expresses no opinion as to the merits of the arrangement which has severed Western Palestine from its natural hinterland, but he gives a most useful account of the genesis of the Trans-Jordan Emirate and its rapid transformation into a nominally independent Principality. Another valuable feature of his book is his skilful handling of the ecclesiastical politics of the post-war period. It devolved upon the Government to deal with the problem of the Chief Rabbinate, to take the initiative in organising the Moslem Supreme Council, and repeatedly to intervene in the tangled affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate. These obscure but important matters are not dealt with in all their wearisome detail, but there are just enough of the salient facts to make the complicated story intelligible. These points have been singled out for mention because they illustrate the comprehensive scope of Mr. Bentwich's work. For the most part he is on less unfamiliar ground; but though much of the material is not new, it has never before been so compactly and so authoritatively assembled.

In one respect his survey is perhaps not quite as complete as it might be. At the head of his second chapter he quotes (in a

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slightly paraphrased form) a sentence from a letter addressed by Lord Balfour to the present writer, and intended for publication on November 2nd, 1927—the tenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. The quotation runs: "British Policy in Palestine was a bold experiment, dealing with an unique situation in a manner wholly without precedent in history." The policy referred to is, of course, the policy embodied in the Balfour Declaration. It is, therefore, rather curious that Mr. Bentwich says comparatively little as to what steps have been taken to give effect to that policy, and with what results. He quotes a lengthy summing-up from Sir Herbert Samuel's final dispatch; but this was written in 1925, and Mr. Bentwich, though he gives some information as to Jewish successes and failures, does not attempt on his own account any similar review of the post-war period as a whole. It would have been interesting to know what impression the pictures make in perspective on an observer who was in personal sympathy with the Zionist Movement and had also—a unique combination—held high office for many years in the Palestine Government.

Indeed, the main criticism—almost the only serious criticism—of *England in Palestine* as a whole is that, not only in connection with the Jews, but more generally, Mr. Bentwich shows a regrettable reticence in comment—a reticence which inevitably makes the book a little colourless, though it is intelligible enough in a high official who has only just retired and is not free to tell all he knows. The Government of Palestine has done some admirable work, which is a credit to the Mandatory Power—of that there is not the slightest doubt. But it must surely (one thinks) have had its failures as well as its successes; and one would like to know more about some of its thornier problems as they looked from within—more about the real reasons why it failed where it did fail—more, above all, about the total effect of thirteen years of British Administration in Palestine, as viewed in perspective by a singularly competent observer. But where so much is given it may seem ungrateful to ask for more. *England in Palestine* is a solid achievement of permanent value, and hope that one day Mr. Bentwich will feel free to interpret as well as to record.

LEONARD STEIN.

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Louder and Funnier. By P. G. WODEHOUSE. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.

The Dry Pickwick. By STEPHEN LEACOCK. Lane. 7s. 6d.

We have had occasion in the past to feel Mr. Christopher Morley's power and pathos—dashed here and there with a delightfully rich humour; but in his latest book, all other ingredients are out-tasted by a deliciously nonsensical humour—less sophisticated and more substantial than the kind he distilled in *Rudolph and Amina*. The Manhattan family—father and mother and two boys all told—are cast by a life-raft upon the unfinished upper regions of the most famous skyscraper in New York—a destination which they mistake for the top-most ribs of a gigantic tree.

The ramping of beasts and shrieking of birds which they imagine come to them from far beneath, the strange anthropoids, who are their only neighbours, their perilous descent into the jungle below and subsequent adventures there, and, finally, the startling characters of the two American adventurers who round off the story—all give ample scope for the parodist; and Mr. Morley rises to the occasion. He leaves no mess behind; but cleans everything up before the end and gently disposes of his tags in a last surprise. It would be hard for a book of such mingled realism and fantasy to preserve an unshakable poise throughout, and the author does not quite achieve this; but we can forgive him a strain at the situation here and there for the glamour of nonsense that shines through the whole, and could forgive him almost anything for his description of New York traffic seen from a skyscraper.

> Like great beasts under rein and spur they rolled, wove in and out, paused panting with suppressed power. If delayed more than a few instants one, more ill-tempered than the rest, would utter a yelp of annoyance, and this was taken up by the whole pack, braying in gusts of impatience. Suddenly, with a common scream of exultation, all were unleashed and sprang furiously forward.

Mr. Wodehouse advises all who are going to open his book to indulge in a good square meal first; and certainly it is a book to be enjoyed in an after-dinner mood; but the anecdotal atmosphere of his humour suffers from a certain redundancy which is painfully typical of too many after-dinner speakers: "Revolutions have come about for smaller reasons, and against tyranny slighter than this whole populations have arisen in rebellion," is the type of sentence in which the book abounds too freely—a sentence whose second half means precisely the same as its first.

Nevertheless, Mr. Wodehouse never lets you down for long. One has scarcely regained one's normal colour from blushing at a particularly clumsy joke when one is suddenly thrown into the heights of ecstasy, and there sustained for whole pages. Who but Mr. Wodehouse would remind us that "some are born with butlers, some attain butlers, and some have butlers thrust upon them, and thus; in three strokes, divide society into as many parts?"

Pickwick without the liquor, if not like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark, is at least like *Macbeth* without the atmospherics; but the ingredients of Mr. Stephen Leacock's cocktail will compensate for his discouraging title. Europe and America, inflation and deflation, Mr. Ghandi, the golf course and the school-room all flash and glitter in its depths; but there is little to quench the appetites of those who are out for anything more substantial than a literary viand, as the butler is ready to inform us.

> This is the Rain Water Room, sir. Nothing else except rainwater and practically all of it from the same date. The year 1924, sir, as you may recall, was a wonderful year for Rain Water—something in the quality, sir. It was a rain, sir, with better body to it, fuller, sweeter than any rain, I think, since the famous year 1888.

The Dry Pickwick is, luckily, a nightmare from which Mr. Pickwick awakens to find himself back in the old world, and to find Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, and Mr. Winkle beside him with a tall and bubbling brandy and soda—leaping in the sunshine. So Mr. Pickwick wakes from his nightmare of America in the twentieth century; but, we are tempted to ask, what would our twentieth-century humorists do without prohibition? These books would have been half their size; and that alone would have been a loss.

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THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT

The Theory and Practice of Modern Government. By HERMAN FINER, D.Sc. 2 Vols. Methuen. 42s.

In the preface to his two immense volumes Dr. Finer explains their length by the comprehensiveness of their contents. The subject—the structure, machinery, and practice of government in democratic countries—has, he says, never been treated with such care. "Nor has any work hitherto regarded and presented the various elements of government as a living whole, showing the interrelations between the parts." Dr. Finer tells us that his study is founded "upon all the available material" as well as upon direct observation, that his work is scientific in treatment as well as "simple and clear in exposition." Unlike Lowell and Bryce, he adds, his book is "truly comparative," since it treats each topic "not country by country, but subject by subject." I read these remarks with some misgiving, but after working my way through a large part of Dr. Finer's 1,550 pages, I have come to the conclusion that his claims are justified. His book is, in fact, the product of remarkable learning, of years of discriminating, patient research; it is well-digested; it is astonishingly comprehensive, reliable and impartial in its diagnosis and more genuinely comparative in method than any of the other big books on government with which I am acquainted. I should have preferred to have found these things out for myself, but the important thing is that they are true and that Dr. Finer has really produced one of those books which every student of the art and science (as I think Dr. Finer hopes to make it) of government will find an indispensable source of information. This book makes Bryce's *Modern Democracies* seem flimsy.

In spite of all this Dr. Finer's treatise does not seem to me, as a whole, a success. That is not his fault. He has attempted an impossibility. Because he belongs to the younger generation he has not been satisfied to accept political phenomena at their face value. He is aware of economics and of psychology as part of his subject-matter. The psychology he has largely omitted; the economic aspect of his subject he cannot overlook. And he is continuously confronted with philosophic questions. Anxious to avoid the usual pitfalls of political science—the confusion of what is with what ought to be, the intrusion of moral judgments into what purport to be statements of fact—he has tried to dispose of the philosophic basis in a preliminary chapter. It is the least satisfactory in the book, and in spite of his effort to judge every institution simply on grounds of efficiency, the inevitable questions, efficiency for what? good for what? do crop up all the while we read. Moreover, we know too much nowadays—Dr. Finer certainly knows too much—about the working of government to be able to discuss in any satisfying way, in a single book, however large the book and conscientious the author, all the relevant problems. Dr. Finer treats of the philosophy and historical development of the State, the relation of economics to politics, the machinery of government, the way the various constitutions work in Great Britain, France, the United States, and other countries, the various types of electoral system, the formation of public opinion, the press, types of Parliamentary government and of Parliamentary candidate, party methods, kings and presidents, varieties of civil service, and hosts of incidental topics. It is too much. Just as the economist now knows too much to be able to combine in a single treatise—as he once did—the theory and history of economics, a description of the way industry and finance work and his aspirations of how they ought to work, so the political scientist must, I think, abandon the comprehensive treatise and work rather at realistic analysis of one specific problem of government after another. It is noticeable that the best of Dr. Finer's chapters are of this kind. His final study of the Civil Service is his most original and valuable contribution.

Dr. Finer's book seems to me, therefore, instructive both in its manifold detailed successes and in its general failure. As a compendium of organised and related facts, it will remain for many years unsurpassed. But what conclusions is one to draw from the facts? Dr. Finer's own conclusions are stated in a few pages at the end of his book. The remarkable thing about Bryce's latest work was his new uncertainty about the future of democracy. Dr. Finer is even more uncertain. He says that unless some "chance" keeps society together democracy looks like smashing altogether. He cannot believe that an uneducated democracy can survive, and he thinks it necessary tha

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K. M.

THE KAISER EXCUSES

Germany's Road to Ruin. By KARL FRIEDRICH NOWAK. Putnam. 21s.

The publishers state that this book was written "in close co-operation with the ex-Kaiser himself." It may, therefore, be taken as part of William II's official apology; and if it be read as a psychological document rather than as sober history, it is both fascinating and instructive. The burden of the book is that the ex-Kaiser saw, in every important case, what was best for his country; but that in each crisis, either he was forced by his constitutional advisers into doing what he knew to be wrong, or else his efforts in the right direction were thwarted behind his back—first by Marschall and Holstein, later by Holstein and Bülow. Undoubtedly there is some truth in this story. Bülow was a poltroon who flattered and misled his master out of sheer indolence and incompetence. Count Hatzfeld summed the man up: "He is a lazy liar." And Baron Holstein can be seen as the most malignant character in modern history. By blackmail and intrigue he acquired a hold over most of the weak and faithless men who surrounded William, and he used his power for pure mischief. But all this does not exculpate the Kaiser. It might be possible to whitewash either William II's honour or his intelligence—but not both. If he thought that Germany's chances to make friends with England, with Japan, and with Russia were being thwarted by these vain and evil men, then he is criminal for not cleaning them out at whatever cost to his own popularity. On the other hand, if all this was happening and he remained in ignorance of it, believing what the smooth-tongued Bülow told him, then he was a simple dupe.

The most interesting material in the book—and in its various phases it runs all through the book—is the story of the failure of the many attempts at an Anglo-German alliance. Chamberlain wanted it; the Kaiser thought he wanted it; the world would have benefited by it; but Baron Holstein opposed. The ex-Kaiser pictures himself as having sought most earnestly for England's friendship (after having been forced, against his protests, to send the Kruger telegram), and as believing that his Foreign Office was whole-heartedly seconding his efforts. Therefore he blamed the failure on England. "He did not yet know that a German Chancellor and his adviser, working with an unscrupulousness beyond all measure and an arrogance to match it . . . had destroyed the good relations of two great nations and the peace of the world." Over and over again comes the same complaint. If this book were taken seriously, the ex-Kaiser would emerge as a friend of peace, but the war-guilt accusation in the Treaty of Versailles should be underlined rather than deleted. "Amid the great encirclement with offers of friendship and alliance from East and West, Secretary of State Count Bülow and *Geheimrat* von Holstein set to work thoroughly to smash up the ring of peace." That sentence reads like allied propaganda from 1916. Apparently William II has not yet lost the knack of injuring his country.

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SHORTER NOTICES

Must the League Fail? By L. A. ZIMMERN. Martin Hopkinson. 2s. 6d.

Very few of the big books about the League tell one as much as Mrs. Zimmern does in less than 100 pages. Her conclusions about the future of the League are not very remarkable or important. Her analysis, obviously based on a great deal of inside knowledge of the way in which the old diplomacy "has succeeded in entrenching itself in the Secretariat," is of quite unusual interest. The book is full of wit as well as of acute observation. One seldom finds so many good epigrams about a usually dull subject in any one place. Her chapter on the Council ends as follows: "The old women on the desert island lived by taking in one another's washing. The diplomats are not condemned to such menial labour. They survive by locking up the skeletons in one another's cupboards. One good turn of the key deserves another. Then the keys are collected on a ring and presented to the President of the League Council."

The Riddle of Rationalisation. By L. J. BARLEY. Allen and Unwin. 4s. 6d.

Mr. Barley is one of those many writers who have been led by the events of the past few years to realise the necessity of a rationalisation which goes farther than mere unification of certain industries under capitalist control on the basis of the most modern mechanical equipment. He stands for a "national plan" and wants the government to take the initiative in bringing about the full unification of each of the main industries and their co-ordination as part of a single national industrial system. But he wants the government to do this by calling together the leaders of industry; and he wants the rationalisation to which he looks forward to be carried through by those leaders without any kind of government control. The question that he does not face is how far any "national plan" is really possible under these conditions. For will industries brought under unified capitalist control be conducted in such a way as to fall in with any national conception of policy transcending the interests of those concerned in each particular industry?

Amos 'n' Andy. By CHARLES J. CORRELL and FREEMAN F. GOSDEN. Constable. 3s. 6d.

The voices count more perhaps than might be expected. The bare dialogues in print are only a score, not very rich, not very funny, such as only the fruity intonation of these two comedians could transform. That is the case with most music-hall patter, though for the wireless a more substantial humour as a rule is necessary. Here, at any rate, the patter is, and imagination or memory supplies the rest. The avoidance of obvious wisecracks and the suggestion that every word however guileless is underlined, are managed with real subtlety. Mr. Irvin S. Cobb in a note introducing them, suggests that they have become popular because they are "so natural, so simple, so doggoned human." So doggoned clever, too.

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LONGMANS

The Club. By BARBARA BLACKBURN. Secker. 7s. 6d.

This is a depressing and impressive novel. It gives a picture of what is both a symptom and a result of the post-war flight from morality, the up-river "boozing" club, and of the people who frequent such a place. Brian Wister is a young man whose most definite characteristic is his all-round vagueness. He is persuaded by a plausible scoundrel to become secretary of a club run by a gang of swindlers; he falls in love with a girl who is obviously suited to him, only to lose her through lack of "guts," and it is not until he has lost everything that he begins to show signs of constructive thought. Put like that, the plot of *The Club* may sound somewhat crude, but Miss Blackburn writes with a subtlety peculiarly her own, and all her characters are depicted with a keen and unsentimental detachment. She has contented herself with a small canvas, but the picture is painted with a fine detail worthy of a miniature, and her characters are none the less real for being less than life-size.

Gallop! By JOHN RESSICH. Benn. 7s. 6d.

"Well, Geoff," said Tom, as if it were his final judgment, "it was a hell of a war!" "It was, Tom. But, by God, I wouldn't have missed it for a million!" These are the closing sentences of a book which may adequately represent the attitude to the war of a majority of the "huntin', shootin' and fishin'" section of English society, an attitude which is undoubtedly shared by a good many Tory politicians and not a few others who have forgotten the horror and remembered the adventure. An author who takes this line must have a simple mental make-up, and *Gallop!* is a novel which in pre-war days most parents would have considered unexceptionable reading for schoolboys. It tells the story of the part played by a British cavalry regiment in France and North Africa; the war is treated as a romantic adventure, and any Germans who appear in the story are either cads or cowards. There have, perhaps, been too many novels emphasising the ignoble and ignoring the heroic traits of man's character which are brought out by war, but it may be doubted whether Mr. Ressich has helped to redress the balance. An introduction by Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham supports the author's thesis.

The Young Revolutionist. By PEARL S. BUCK. Methuen. 3s. 6d.

In this short, but not very compact, story, Mrs. Buck has returned for her setting to China, and like *East Wind: West Wind* it is chiefly interesting for the sidelights thrown on Chinese life in a period of chaos. A young boy runs away from the temple in which he was destined to spend his life, joins the revolutionary army of Sun Yat Sen, is involved in a battle as the result of which his friend dies, comes in contact with an English medical missionary, and returns home to his humble, rice-growing parents, disillusioned both with traditional and revolutionary China. At the end he resolves to return to the hospital to learn there how to serve his country best. The story has a simplicity of manner and of matter which is not without charm, but in spite of an obvious effort on the part of the author to be fair to those with whose views she disagrees, it is slightly marred by a propagandist element.

Midnight on the Place Pigalle. By MAURICE DEKOBRA. Werner Laurie. 7s. 6d.

Monsieur Prosper was the "Great Chamberlain of the Ante-Chamber of Vice," or, in other words, *maître d'hôtel* at a fashionable, prosperous, and disreputable Montmartre restaurant. For years he occupied that position untainted by the evil with which he was surrounded and which he served. After he had retired to a farm in the country, the life which, while he was in the midst of it, held no allurement for him, exercises an irresistible attraction; he yields to temptation, and is completely ruined, mentally and physically. Such a plot gives M. Dekobra opportunity to display once more his knowledge of the *demi-monde*, and there is a satiric interlude of provincial life; all the elements which (alas!) have made him a "best-seller" are present in his latest book, though the colours are not quite so crudely laid on and once or twice he is in danger of becoming witty. M. Dekobra, in fact, although he is no Boccaccio, can tell a story well, and the fact that the story is *risqué* naturally adds to its popularity.

The Story of Leland Gay. By A. R. WEEKES. Constable. 7s. 6d.

Leland Gay, who tells his own story for Miss Weekes, was the son of a Somerset squire and a Russian princess. The first third of the book tells briefly but vividly of his early life in Russia, his schooldays in England, his war experiences, and his return on demobilisation to country life. The rest deals with events which are indirectly the legacy of his Russian mother, and a peaceful autobiography becomes suddenly the story of a mysterious murder, worthy of a best-selling "thriller." The Russian scenes before the war and during and after the revolution, are, perhaps because they are unfamiliar, both the most convincing and the most interesting; and one wishes that Miss Weekes had prolonged them a little instead of concentrating upon her rather conventionalised picture of English country life.

In a review, on March 5th, it was incorrectly stated that Mr. C. W. Everett's THE EDUCATION OF JEREMY BENTHAM *was published by the Cambridge University Press. The book was issued by the Columbia University Press in America, and its English publisher is the Oxford University Press.*

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About Motoring

ODDS AND ENDS

THESE notes are inspired by a feminine letter seeking advice in the purchase of motoring presents for a masculine acquaintance on the occasion of his birthday. A brief survey of my garage suggested that in spite of the modern advertising slogans about "complete equipment" the motorist needs a host of small oddments which are not supplied by the car manufacturer. Some of them are decidedly costly, and others are cheap. In the former class come such accessories as really efficient tyre pumps and jacks. Most cars are delivered with shoddy pumps, and the weekly task of correcting tyre pressures is more likely to be tackled with the aid of a duplex tyre pump, fitted with a lightning connector. This will cost between 50s. and £3. The standard jack is a crude affair, and a hydraulic instrument is much pleasanter to operate. Better still are the quadruple sets designed to be permanently bolted to the chassis; they eliminate the need for stooping or even creeping; and they encourage an owner to maintain his brakes in absolutely first-class adjustment. The expenditure of £10 on such equipment may thus result in saving life, and the four jacks can always be transferred when the car is sold, as the cost of new clips and refitting is trivial.

Every car should mount a fog lamp. I dare not recommend any particular make, as they vary enormously in cost and efficiency, and I have not tried them all. The typical pattern consists of a small searchlight with yellow glass; it is fixed low down on the near-side dumb-iron or running board, and can be used as a spot or inspection lamp in emergencies. Other patterns are centrally mounted, usually at about axle level. Every car should carry a complete set of spare bulbs, five in all, stored in a wadded case to keep them from being broken. It is further advisable to pack emergency lamps in case of a complete failure

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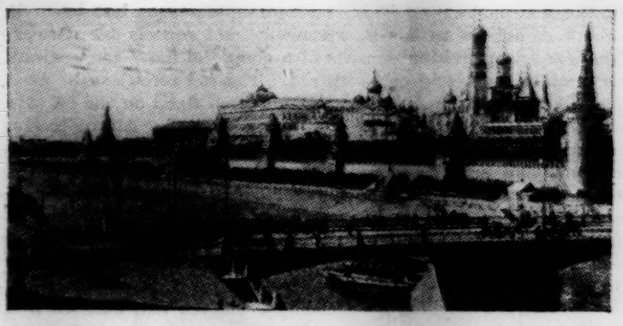

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of the service lamps. This is a rare emergency; but when it occurs it inflicts serious inconvenience and conceivable danger. The simplest provision consists of a couple of hand torches, one with white glass, and one with red. The red torch can be used instead of a tail lamp, and the white torch fixed on the off side at the front of the car until repairs are effected. Alternatively, red and white reflex mirrors of 8in. diameter can be bolted to the car fore and aft as a warning to other traffic while the car is temporarily lampless. This disaster befell me twice in a single season, and on both occasions my car was embedded in twisty lanes where I was in imminent danger of being rammed. A single experience of this kind will inspire the most casual owner to action.

The tool kit is seldom required by a modern car, but, when it is required, its defects are usually obvious. In particular, the owner who decarbonises his own engine will soon yearn for better tools and for additional tools. A set of first-class open-ended spanners in all the ordinary Whitworth sizes makes a splendid present for an owner-driver.

Upper-cylinder lubrication is being forced on us all by low-grade fuels, necessitating excessive use of the strangler in starting and warming up an engine. The strangler washes oil off the pistons and cylinder walls, and there is no remedy except to introduce oil with the fuel. For a few shillings a sizeable tin of a suitable oil may be purchased for mixing with the petrol; it will not accomplish miracles, but it partly neutralises the evils of strangling. The wings are the most vulnerable detail of a car, and few cars survive their first year without scrapes and crumplings of at least the minor order. It is now possible to buy for half a sovereign or so a miniature spraying outfit with which any handy man can literally repaint such grazes into invisibility. The outfit will not roll out dents, which limits its usefulness; but it will soon save its cost, even if any heavy blows necessitate a visit to a machine shop.

To the best of my belief no car is furnished with a hydrometer at delivery. This instrument informs the owner when the accumulator is being undercharged, and is quite the handiest tool for replenishing the cells with distilled water if they are inaccessibly placed on the car. Incidentally, it serves a secondary purpose in ministering to the accumulators of the domestic wireless set. The modern type is fitted with coloured balls instead of specific gravity calibration, and is therefore easier for an amateur to operate.

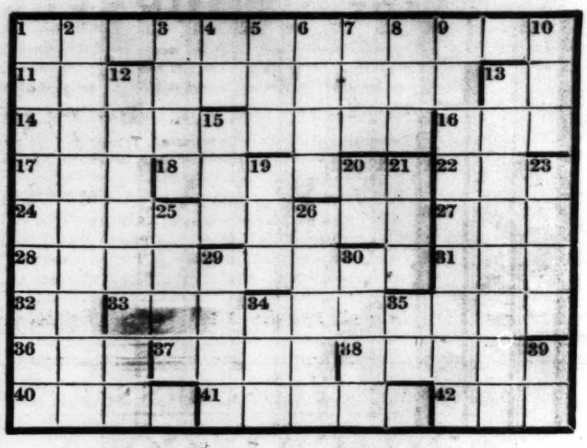
A more expensive addition to the car takes the form of a second spare wheel, complete with tyre. This accessory is essential for long-distance work, though it may seldom be required on short runs. All ardent travellers know the misery of driving with the fifth wheel flat, knowing that if they sustain a second puncture before reaching a garage they must tackle a very filthy job by the roadside, possibly in the dark or in rain. The possession of a second spare eliminates this nuisance. Most manufacturers supply the requisite fittings for mounting a second spare wheel on their standard cars.

If an owner drives a cheap car, and experiences any difficulty in seeing at night, it is probable that his headlamps are cheap and inefficient. With first-class headlamps night driving is a simple matter for people with very second-rate sight. Such owners should buy a pair of first-class headlamps, and transfer them to the new car at the sale of their present vehicle. Such lamps do not consume more current than the cheap types, and they furnish perfect visibility for at least 400 yards ahead. They should not, of course, be employed except in conjunction with a proper anti-dazzle device, with a control placed conveniently near the driver's hand. I am not personally very enthusiastic about the various forms of driving signal which substitute illuminated arrows for the outstretched arm. They disfigure a car; they are no quicker than hand signals; as they are not standardised, following drivers never know when or where to look for them, so that they are often overlooked. The "stop" lamp is an exception, and a sample can easily be fitted in place of any standard tail lamp; being automatically operated by the brake pedal they relieve a driver, especially in sudden emergencies. A double windscreen wiper represents a great improvement on a single wiper, but the second arm may overload a suction wiper when the surface of the glass offers serious resistance, as in snowy weather. If a single wiper is operated by gear or by electricity, a second arm may be added without hesitation, and offers the driver much better visibility, especially on wet nights.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Playtime

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



SOUND & FURY

ACROSS

1. These often get broken off.
11. Willow-herbs and such-like.
13. Lady Macbeth's request to her dinner-party.
14. These economics are out-of-date.
16. Green before a don.
17. Dignitary of the Catholic church.
18. In authority in N. Africa.
22 *rev.* Louis 16th's was severed.
24. Perhaps the two wives of a hen-pecked Mormon!!
27. You've forgotten yourself, Mamma.
28. I measure change.
31 *rev.* All the best Bishops have one.
32. Sex appeal in a cocktail.
33. A "sticky" one.
36. Rome's hills.
37. You get not far away from me.
38 *rev.* A 4th century heretic.
40. Behold, said Pilate.
41. See 25.
42. I've lost my "inder" part.

DOWN

1. Erecting a standard.
2. One hopes one's puzzle is this.
3. The reverse of a nourishing food.
4. The Iliad was by Pope.
5. Often denoted an epic.
6. My name often ends in —ic.
7. I once rhymed with "obey."
8. My hay is a sentimentalist.
9, 39. Universal.
10. With us alone.
12. Another form of puzzle.
13. Archimedes was a whale on this.
15. Origin of woman.
19 *rev.* Small loan requested by Antony.
20. Interested in patrols and petrols.
21. A second line of defence.
23. Few prefer credit.
25, 41. Badly needed at Shanghai.
26. A packing-case turns up.
29. German novelist.
30. Once I might have been the other way up.
34. Mehitabel was this toujours.
35. Meric has escaped from the New World.
39. See 9.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS.—1. *Stoke-on-Trent.* 10. patina. 12. Edict. 15. abide. 16. *Longton.* 17. L.C.C. 19. Blue. 21. sops. 22. *Hanley.* 25. oecist. 29. etiology. 31. ago. 32. unsisterly. 34. Tree. 35. zodiacal. 38. (a)iesta. 39. *Burslem.*

DOWN.—1. spaghetti. 2. tablature. 3. (ex)otic. 4. kid. 5. bene *rer.* 6. neo (one). 7. rig. 8. ecto(plasm). 9. *Tunstall.* 11. ally. 14. top. 18. closet. 20. uogtdu (dugout). 21. scar. 23. nines. 24. Eliza. 26. eye (for an eye). 27. ig(noble). 28. soya. 30. osob (boos). 33. LCL. 36, 37. ir, as (airs).

The place names italicised are those of the "Five Towns."

THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE

The Professor was having breakfast with his daughters. "Listen," said Mary, "to the curious conditions drawn up by the Bazaar Committee:

'No article is to be priced at more than 5s.'

'Every article is to cost an exact number of shillings.'

'There are not to be more than two prices at any stall.'

'No two stalls are to have the same range of prices.'"

"How much will you give us to spend?" asked Martha.

The Professor made a rapid calculation.

"I will give you £4 9s." he said. "You are to spend it all at one stall; no two of you will spend the same amount; and each of you will buy a present for me and a present for each of the others."

"Which stall are we to spend it at?" asked Mary.

The Professor laughed, "I am afraid you will have no option."

How many daughters has he?

LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

The chance that the Ace of Spades is turned up $= \frac{52}{51 \cdot 53}$

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

IVAR KREUGER—THE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES OF HIS GROUP—CABLES AND WIRELESS—WISDOM OF SIR HENRI DETERDING

THOSE whom the gods would destroy they first make great financiers. This was the first thought which came to me on reading the news of the tragic death of Ivar Kreuger, the Swedish "Match King." Then it occurred to me that the word "bankers" might be substituted for the word "gods." The bankers' pursuit after liquidity—the bankers' insistence that their cash ratios must be strengthened even if it means weakening or even killing the trader—this might be the basic cause of Mr. Kreuger's downfall. It was known in Stockholm—whence a good deal of the recent stock selling emanated—that Kreuger and Toll were being hard pressed for money. Mr. Kreuger is believed to have borrowed by means of acceptance credits, in New York and Paris last September, the bulk of the £2,160,000 required for the Polish match monopoly as a first instalment of a £6,480,000 loan. These credits were said to be repayable at the end of this month. Further, the Swedish Riksbank had rediscounted Kr. 120 millions (about £6½ millions) of Kreuger and Toll bills (under Mr. Kreuger's personal guarantee) which fell due also about the end of this month. The Scandinaviska Kreditaktiebolaget, the bank connected with the Swedish Match group, was understood to be requiring a reduction of its Kreuger and Toll acceptances and discounts. Obviously, Mr. Kreuger was in serious financial difficulties. Perhaps other engagements were falling due which Kreuger and Toll could not meet because their liquid assets were no longer liquid, but frozen. This can happen to any great international trading concern in a period of abnormal and prolonged business depression, especially when Governments control exchange dealings and can prevent the transfer of funds. What the banks usually do in such circumstances—what they have been obliged to do in Germany—is not to harass the debtor, but to translate short-term credits into long-term credits. But either the banks who were concerned refused or Mr. Kreuger did not dare to ask them for an extension of their credits. It is said that a telegram from the Swedish Riksbank, summoning him to an inquisitorial conference, greeted Mr. Kreuger on his arrival in Paris. Was the self-inflicted fatal wound an answer to that telegram?

* * *

Another mystery which remains to be cleared up is the origin of the "bear" operations in Kreuger and Toll and Swedish Match shares. Mr. Kreuger, usually the strong, silent man, was moved to make an interim statement for his shareholders in September last when his shares had being showing marked weakness in the markets. In this statement he attributed the selling of Kreuger and Toll shares in part to forced liquidation and in part "to an internationally organised bear syndicate which does not hesitate to spread unfounded rumours." I have read that this syndicate had been traced to the machinations of the Soviet Government, which had opposed the match king's German monopoly, but no one in their senses will doubt that, if it existed at all, it was composed of American and French stock market gamblers of Hebrew origin. Such things happen in financial "high life." Mr. Kreuger was a man of enlightened principles whose ideas of financial service were far in advance of the world of bankers in which he had to move. In the 1930 report of his company he had already traced the cause of the world economic crisis to "the inadequacy of the present monetary policy . . . to cope with . . . a rapid increase in savings and in production." He had deplored the "disappearance of the great merchant banking houses and the substitution for them of large deposit banks and insurance companies which were restricted in the use of their funds and tended to make the whole economic structure more rigid than before." It was his ambition to use the Kreuger and Toll Company "to improve and supplement the present inadequate machinery for international financing." Perhaps he overreached himself. At any rate, he was an easy prey for the unscrupulous "bear" operator even before he became the victim of the hard-headed banker.

* * *

As far as can be seen from outside the Swedish Match Company is trading on a sound commercial basis. The consumption of matches holds up and it pays to manufacture and sell them. Of course, the company will have to write down the book values of the foreign Government bonds it holds—for this reason it passed its interim dividend—but as the service of these bonds is usually more than covered by the royalties it pays to the Government concerned for the match monopoly rights, it should not suffer in income. Its chief investment risk is its share ($87.5 millions) of the $125 millions loan to the German Government which is not specifically secured on the match monopoly. A German default would be a serious matter for Swedish Match. Further, it is not known how far the company may be involved in loans to the Kreuger and Toll group. That most investors were willing to take a hopeful view of its future was evident from the partial recovery in Swedish Match B shares from 2½ to 3½ this week. (Par value £5 10s. and highest price last year £13¾.) It was significant that Kreuger and Toll B shares remained undemanded at 2 and the 5% Secured Debentures at 45. It is impossible even to guess at this company's position. It is not, of course, immediately solvent and it will have to take full advantage of the moratorium granted to it by the Swedish State. Not only its foreign Government bonds but its permanent shareholdings, (for example, Swedish Pulp, Grangesberg [iron ore], Ericsson Telephone, not to mention Swedish Match) will have to be heavily written down to current market values. But Mr. Kreuger was never a gambler in his financing. He never bought at inflated values with the idea of unloading on to an ignorant public at a huge profit (unless the recent Boliden gold mine acquisition is an exception). Thus it seems reasonable to expect that with a balance sheet total of Kr. 1,514.7 millions, showing net earnings in 1931 of Kr. 110,500,000, the Company can be saved from liquidation. Without Mr. Kreuger, however, I can see no future for Kreuger and Toll. Who would be willing to wear his mantle? It is strange that I should have written in these columns on April 18th last: "An investor in Kreuger and Toll would no doubt like to take out first of all an insurance policy on Mr. Kreuger's life."

* * *

The City of London cannot throw stones at Ivar Kreuger. Our own attempts at the colossal have not met with any striking success. Indeed, the greatest industrial combine we have ever created—namely the Royal Mail group, which controlled about one-sixth of the whole British mercantile marine—has seen its author cast into prison, has only narrowly escaped falling under the hammer, and is now to be split up into rationalised operating units, if the various stockholders will give their consent. Another great British combine, which was solemnly blessed by the Governments of the Empire at its birth in 1928, finds itself too poor to take possession of its palatial new offices on the Embankment, and on its trading results might vulgarly be described, as far as its capitalisation is concerned, as a "ramp." This is the Cables and Wireless combine whose stockholders, as I showed last week, have suffered a depreciation in the market value of their securities of no less than £28,000,000 since 1930. It is surely time to face up to realities and write down this combine's capital. The experts in 1928 fixed the standard revenue of the operating subsidiary, Imperial and International Communications, at £1,865,000 and its capital at £30,000,000. The issued capital of Cables and Wireless came to £52.5 millions. The nominal capitalisation of the constituent Cable Companies and Marconi before the merger was approximately £16 millions. In the gamble which took place in Cable and Marconi stocks prior to the completion of the merger the market valuation of the constituent companies rose to about £51 millions. In other words Cables and Wireless was capitalised at the top prices of the boom. The purchase price of the Marconi assets is said to have represented forty years' purchase of that Company's pre-merger profits. In 1930 Cables and Wireless earned only 1.09 per cent. on its total capital. In 1931 it will have earned less. The £23.2 millions of 5½ per cent. preference stock are to go without a dividend. The £20.6 millions of 7½ per cent. A ordinary stock and £8.6 millions of B ordinary stock will never have a dividend as long as this capitalisation lives.

* * *

It is now possible to appreciate the wisdom of Sir Henri Deterding, the genius of the Royal Dutch-Shell group. We know what can happen to world-wide combines if they run short of cash. Sir Henri and his colleagues have made it certain that they will never suffer that fate. In the years 1929–31 they raised £50,000,000 new money. The Shell Union has now $35,000,000 in cash and Royal Dutch and Shell Transport at the end of 1930 had £20 million in cash and bonds. This is our modern edition of the parable of the wise virgins.

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GLOBE.	PUNCHINELLO.	Wed. & Sat.
HIPPODROME.	BOW BELLS.	Daily.
QUEEN'S.	CARAVAN.	April 2.
WESTMINSTER.	TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL.	Wed., Sat.
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